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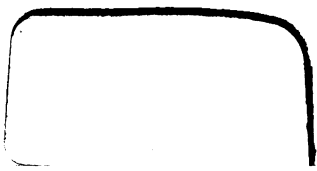
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R E F A C E.

The first piece of this Check was designed for a preface to the Discourse that follows, but swelled far beyond my intention, I presented the Reader under the name of *An historical* makes way for the tracts that follow. In respect to the *Discourse*, I must mention to me to publish it. In 1771 I saw the called *the Minutes*. Their author invited to *the whole affair*." I did so; and soon had "leaned too much towards Calvinism," after mature consideration, appeared to coincide with *speculative* antinomianism. The same year I publicly acknowledged these words:

"How springs this almost general antinomianism in our congregations? Shall I conceal the weight of its fetters in *my own* breast? Shall I be silent in the name of Him, who is no respecter of persons, I will confess my sin, and that my brethren, &c. — Is not the antinomianism of hearers fomented by that of preachers? Have we become *us* to take the greatest part of the blame upon *ourselves*, according to the old *priest like people*? Is it surprising that we should have an antinomian audience? How can we make or keep it so? When did *we* deliver a *practical* sermon, as that of our Lord Jesus? or write such *close* letters, as the apostle John?" Second Check, p. 64, and the paragraph.

I thus openly confessed, that I was in the guilt of *many of my brethren*, and that I leaned towards *speculative*, as not to have stood against *practical* antinomianism; I thought, that one of my most formidable

John Tindall 1809

Fleta

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William Fletcher

The First Part of

A-N

EQUAL CHECK

1743
Pharisaism and Antinomianism,

CONTAINING

- I. An HISTORICAL ESSAY on the danger of parting
Faith and Works.
- II. *Salvation by the covenant of grace*, A DISCOURSE
preached in the parish church of Madeley, April
18, and May 9, 1775.
- III. A SCRIPTURAL ESSAY on the astonishing re-
wardableness of works, according to the covenant
of grace.
- IV. An ESSAY ON TRUTH, Or, A rational Vindica-
tion of the doctrine of salvation by Faith, with a
dedicatory Epistle to the Right Hon. the Countess
of Huntingdon.

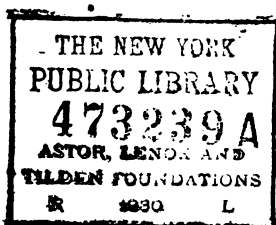
The armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left,
2 Cor. vi. 7.

By the Author of the CHECKS to ANTINOMIANISM.

S H R E W S B U R Y :

Printed by J. EDDOWES: and sold at the Foundry, and by
J. BUCKLAND, in Pater-noster-Row, London; by T. MILLS
in Bath; and S. ARIS in Birmingham. 1774.

[Price Two Shillings.]



SOON WILL BE PUBLISHED,

Zelotes and Honestus reconciled :

O R,

The Second Part of an Equal Check to Pharisaism
and Antinomianism :

BEING BOTH

S C R I P T U R E - S C A L E S

To weigh the gold of gospel-truth :

AND A

DOCTRINAL CONCORDANCE

To reconcile and balance a multitude of opposite
scriptures, to prove the gospel-marriage of Free-
grace and Free-will, and restore primitive harmony
to the

Gospel of the day.

Si non est Dei gratia, quomodo salvat mundum ? Si non est liberum
arbitrium, quomodo judicat mundum. *Aug : Ep. 46.*

P R E F A C E.

I. **T**H E first piece of this Check was designed for a preface to the Discourse that follows it ; but as it swelled far beyond my intention, I present it to the Reader under the name of *An historical Essay* ; which makes way for the tracts that follow.

II. With respect to the *Discourse*, I must mention what engages me to publish it. In 1771 I saw the propositions called *the Minutes*. Their author invited me to “ *review the whole affair*.” I did so ; and soon found, that I had “ *leaned too much towards Calvinism*,” which, after mature consideration, appeared to me exactly to coincide with *speculative* antinomianism ; and the same year I publicly acknowledged my error in these words :

“ But whence springs this almost general antinomianism of our congregations ? Shall I conceal the
 “ sore because it festers in *my own* breast ? Shall I be
 “ partial ? No : in the name of Him, who is no respecter of persons, I will confess *my* sin, and that
 “ of *many* of my brethren, &c. — Is not the antinomianism of hearers fomented by that of preachers ?
 “ Does it not become *us* to take the greatest part of
 “ the blame upon *ourselves*, according to the old
 “ adage, *Like priest like people* ? Is it surprising that
 “ some of *us* should have an antinomian audience ?
 “ Do *we* not make or keep it so ? When did *we*
 “ preach such a *practical* sermon, as that of our Lord
 “ on the mount ? or write such *close* letters, as the
 “ epistles of St. John ? ” Second Check, p. 64, and 65, to the end of the paragraph.

When I had thus openly confessed, that I was involved in the guilt of *many of my brethren*, and that I had so leaned towards *speculative*, as not to have made a proper stand against *practical* antinomianism ; who could have thought, that one of my most formidable

dable opponents would have attempted to screen his mistakes, behind some passages of a manuscript sermon, which I preached twelve years ago; and of which, by some means or other, he has got a copy?

I am very far however from recanting that old discourse. I still think, the doctrine it contains excellent in the main, and very proper to be enforced [tho' in a more guarded manner] in a congregation of hearers violently prejudiced against the first gospel axiom. Therefore, out of regard for the grand, leading truth of christianity, and in compliance with Mr. H—ll's *earnest intreaty*, [Fin. Stroke, p. 45,] I send my sermon into the world, upon the following reasonable conditions: (1) That I shall be allowed to publish it, as I preached it a year ago in my church; namely, with *additions in brackets*, to make it at once a *fuller* check to pharisaism, and a *finishing* check to antinomianism; (2) That the largest addition shall be in favour of *free grace*: (3) That no body shall accuse me of *forgery*, for thus adding my present light to that which I had formerly; and for thus bringing out of my little treasure of experience *things new and old*: (4) That the press shall not groan with the charge of *disingenuity*, if I throw into notes some unguarded expressions, which I formerly used without scruple, and which my more enlightened conscience does not suffer me to use at present: (5) That my opponent's call to print my sermon, will procure me the pardon of the public, for presenting them with a plain, *blunt* discourse, composed for an audience chiefly made up of colliers and rustics: And lastly, that as I understand english a little better than I did twelve years ago, I shall be permitted to rectify a few french idioms, which I find in my old manuscript; and to *connect* my thoughts a little more like an Englishman, where I can do it without the least misrepresentation of the sense.

If these conditions appear unreasonable to those, who will have heaven itself without any condition, I abolish the distinction between my old sermon, and the additions that guard or strengthen it; and referring

ring the reader to the title page, I publish my discourse on Rom. xi. 5, 6, as a *guarded sermon*, delivered in my church on Sunday April the 18th, &c. 1773, exactly eleven † years after I had preached upon the same text a sermon useful upon the whole, but in some places unguarded, and deficient with respect to the *variety* of arguments and motives, by which the capital doctrines of *free grace* and *gospel obedience* ought to be enforced.

III. With regard to the *SCRIPTURAE ESSAY* upon the rewardableness, or evangelical worthiness of works, I shall just observe, that it attacks the grand mistake of the *Solidians*, countenanced by three or four words of my old sermon. I pour a flood of scriptures upon it; and after receiving the fire of my objector, I return it in a variety of scriptural and rational answers, about the solidity of which the public must decide.

IV. The *ESSAY ON TRUTH* will, I hope, reconcile judicious moralists to the doctrine of salvation *by faith*, and confederate solidians to the doctrine of salvation *by the works* of faith; reason and scripture concurring to show the constant dependance of works upon faith; and the wonderful agreement of the doctrine of present salvation by *TRUE faith*, with the doctrine of eternal salvation by *GOOD works*.

I hope, that I do not dissent, in my observations upon *faith*, either from our Church, or approved gospel-ministers. In their *highest* definitions of that grace, they consider it *only* according to the fulness of the *christian* dispensation; but my subject has obliged me to consider it also according to the dispensations of John the Baptist, Moses, and Noah. Believers, under these *inferior* dispensations, have not always *assurance*; nor is the assurance they sometimes have so bright as that of adult christians, Mat. xi. 11. But undoubtedly assurance is inseparably connected with the faith of the *christian* dispensation, which was not *fully* opened,
till

† My old sermon was preached on Sunday April: 18, 1762, and not 1764, as Mr. H. thro' some mistake informs the public.

till Christ opened *his* glorious baptism on the day of pentecost, and till his spiritual kingdom was set up with power in the heart of his people. No body therefore can truly believe, according to *this* dispensation, without being *immediately* conscious both of the forgiveness of sins, and of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is a most important truth, derided indeed by fallen churchmen, and denied by Laodicean Dissenters; but of late years gloriously revived by Mr. Wesley and the ministers connected with him:—A truth this, which cannot be too strongly, and yet too warily insisted upon in our lukewarm and speculative age: And as I would not obscure it for the world, I particularly intreat the reader to mind the last *erratum*; without omitting the last but one, which guards the doctrine of *initial* salvation by absolute *free grace*.

I do not desire to provoke my able Opponents; but I must own, I should be glad to reap the benefit of my *Checks*, either by finding an increase of religious sobriety and mutual forbearance among those, who make a peculiar profession of faith in Christ; or by seeing, my mistakes [if I am mistaken] brought to light, that I might no longer recommend them as gospel-truths. With this view only, I humbly intreat my brethren and fathers in the church, to point out *by scripture or argument* the doctrinal errors, that may have crept into the *Equal Check*. But if, upon close examination, they should find, that it holds forth the two gospel-axioms in due conjunction, and marks out the *evangelical mean* with strict impartiality; I hope, the moderate and judicious, in the Calvinistic and anti-Calvinistic party, will so far unite upon this plan, as to keep on terms of reciprocal toleration, and brotherly kindness together; rising with redoubled indignation, not one against another, but against those pests of the religious world, *prejudice* and *bigotry*, the genuine parents of implacable fanaticism, and bloody persecution.

Madeley, May 21, 1774.

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E R R A T A.

Page 89, last word, read *mistake*. — p. 21, l. 7, read *flamina*. — p. 93, l. 5, *properly*, read *powerfully*. — p. 140, l. 18, before *salvation* add *eternal*. — p. 143, l. 3, *believing heartily*, read, ONLY *believing confidently*. — p. 228, last line but one, *two*, read, *five*.

A N

A N HISTORICAL ESSAY

Upon the importance and harmony of the two gospel-precepts, Believe and Obey ; and upon the fatal consequences that flow from parting Faith and Works.

WHEN the gospel is considered as opposed to the error of the pharisees, and that of the antinomians, it may be summed up in the two following propositions: (1) In the day of conversion, we are saved freely as sinners [i. e. made freely partakers of the privileges that belong to our gospel dispensation in the church militant] thro' the merits of Christ, and by the instrumentality of a living faith. (2) In the day of judgment we shall be saved freely as saints, [i. e. made freely partakers of the privileges of our gospel dispensation in the church triumphant] thro' the merits of Christ, and by the evidence of evangelical works. Whence it follows: (1) that nothing can absolutely hinder our justification in a gospel day, but the want of true faith; and (2) that nothing will absolutely hinder our justification in the day of judgment, but the want of good works. If I am not mistaken, all the evangelical doctrine of faith and works turns upon those propositions. They exactly answer to the grand directions of the gospel. Wilt thou enter into Christ's sheepfold? *Believe.* — Wilt thou stay there? *Believe and obey.* — Wilt thou be numbered among his sheep in the great day? *Endure unto the end: Continue in well doing:* that is, Persevere in faith and obedience.

To *believe* then and *obey*, or as Solomon expresses it, *To fear God and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man.* Therefore a professor of the faith without genuine obedience, and a pretender to obedience

B

without

without genuine faith, equally miss their aim; while a friend to faith and works put in their proper place, a possessor of the *faith* which *works* by love, hits the gospel mark, and so runs as to obtain the prize: for the same *true and faithful Witness* spoke the two following, and equally express declarations. *He that BELIEVETH on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that BELIEVETH NOT the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* John iii. 36. And, *The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth, they that have DONE GOOD, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have DONE EVIL, unto the resurrection of condemnation.* John v. 29.

See that sculler upon yonder river. The unwearyed diligence and watchful skill, with which he plies his two oars, points out to us the work and wisdom of an experienced divine. What an even, gentle spring does the mutual effort of his oars give to his boat! Observe him: his right hand never rests, but when the stream carries him too much to the left: he slacks not his left hand, unless he is gone too much to the right; nor has he sooner recovered a just medium, than he uses both oars again with mutual harmony. Suppose that for a constancy he employed but one, no matter which, what would be the consequence? He would only move in a circle; and if neither wind nor tide carried him along, after an hard day's work he would find himself in the very spot, where he began his idle toil.

This illustration needs very little explaining: I shall just observe that the antinomian is like a sculler, who uses only his right-hand oar; and the pharisee, like him who plies only the oar in his left hand. One makes an endless bustle about *grace* and *faith*, the other about *charity* and *works*; but both, after all, find themselves exactly in the same case; with this single difference, that one has turned from truth to the right, and the other to the left.

Not so the judicious, unbiassed preacher, who will safely enter the haven of eternal rest, for which he and his hearers are bound. He makes an equal use
of

of the doctrine of *faith* and that of *works*. If at any time he inclines most upon *faith*, it is only when the stream carries his congregation upon the pharisaic shallows on the left hand : And if he lays a preponderating stress upon *works*, it is only when he sees unwary souls sucked into the antinomian whirlpool on the right hand. His skill consists in so avoiding one danger as not to run upon the other.

Nor ought this watchful wisdom to be confined to ministers : for tho' all are not called to direct congregations ; yet all moral agents are, and always were, more or less called to direct themselves, that is, to *occupy till* the Lord comes, by making a proper use of their *talents* according to the parable, Mat. xxv. 15, to 31. God gave to angels and man "*remigium alarum*," the two oars, or if you please, the equal wings of *faith* and *obedience* ; charging them to use those grand powers, according to their original wisdom and enlightened conscience. Or, to speak without metaphor, he created them in such a manner, that they *believed* it their duty, interest, and glory, to *obey* him without reserve ; and this *faith* was naturally productive of an universal, delightful, perfect *obedience*. Nor would they ever have been wanting in *practice*, if they had not first wavered in *principle*. But when Lucifer had unaccountably persuaded himself, in part at least, either that obedience was mean, or that rebellion would be advantageous ; and when the crafty Tempter had made our first parents believe in part, that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, far from dying they should *be as God* himself ; how possible, how easy was it for them to venture upon an act of rebellion !—By rashly playing with the Serpent, and sucking in the venom of his crafty insinuations, they soon gave their *faith* a wilful wound, and their *obedience* naturally died of it : But alas ! it did not die unrevenge ; for no sooner had *fainting faith* given birth to a *dead work*, than she was destroyed by her spurious offspring. Thus *Faith* and *Obedience*, that couple more lovely than David and his friend, more inseparable than Saul

and Jonathan, in their death were not divided. They even met with a common grave, the corrupt atrocious breast of a rebellious angel, or of apostate man.

Nor does St. James give us a less melancholy account of this fatal event. While faith slumbered, *lust conceived, and brought forth sin, and sin finished, brought forth death*, the death of faith, and consequently the *moral death* of angelic spirits and human souls, who equally live by faith † during their state of probation. So fell Lucifer from heaven, to rule and rage in the darkness of this world : So fell Adam from paradise, to toil and die in this vale of tears : So fell Judas from an apostolic throne, to hang himself and go to his own place.

Nor can we rise but in a way parallel to that by which they fell. For, as a *disbelief* of our CREATOR, productive of *bad works*, sunk our first parents ; so a *faith* in our REDEEMER, productive of *good works*, must instrumentally raise their fallen posterity.

Should you ask, which is most necessary to salvation, *faith* or *works* ; I beg leave to propose a similar question. Which is most essential to breathing, *inspiration* or *expiration* ? If you reply, that " The moment either is absolutely at an end, so is the other ; and therefore both are equally important ; " I return exactly the same answer. If *humble faith* receives the breath of spiritual life ; *obedient love* gratefully returns it, and makes way for a fresh supply : when it does not, the spirit is *grieved* ; and if this want of co-operation

† Faith in God as *Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge*, was not less necessary to Lucifer and Adam in order to their standing in a state of innocence, than Faith in God as *Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him, is necessary to *sinners*, in order to their recovery from a state of guilt ; or to *believers* in order to avoid relapses and final apostasy. Faith therefore, so far as it implies an unshaken confidence in God, and a firm adherence to his will, is as eternal as love and obedience. But when it is considered as *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, which are essential properties of a believer's faith in this present state of things, it is evident that it will necessarily end in sight, as soon as the curtain of time is drawn up ; and terminate in enjoyment, as soon as God's glory appears without a veil.

ration is persisted in to the end of *the day of salvation*, the sin unto death is committed, the spirit is *quenched* in his saving operation, the apostate dies the second death, and his corrupt soul is cast into the bottomless pit, as a putrid corpse into the noisome grave.

Again, if faith has the advantage over works by giving them birth, works have the advantage over faith by perfecting it. *Seest thou*, says St. James, speaking of the Father of the faithful, *how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?* And if St. Paul affirms, that *works without faith are dead*, St. James maintains, that *faith without works is dead also*.

Once more, Christ is always the primary, original, properly-meritorious cause of our justification and salvation. To dispute it is to renounce the faith, and to plead for antichrist. And yet, to deny, that, under this primary cause, there are secondary, subordinate, instrumental causes of our justification, and consequently of our salvation, is to set the bible aside, and fly in the face of judicious Calvinists, who cannot help maintaining it, both from the pulpit and from the press. † Now if in the day of our conversion

B 3

faith

† The Rev. Mr. Madan does not scruple to call our faith "*the instrumental cause*" of our justification. See his sermon on James ii. 24, printed by Fuller, London, 1761, page 18. And if we shall be justified in the day of judgment *BY our words*, they shall undoubtedly be at least an *evidencing cause* of our final justification. Hence it is that the same judicious divine speaks [p. 30, l. 4, &c.] of our being "justified in this threefold sense of the word, *meritoriously* by Christ, *instrumentally* by faith, and *declaratively* by works, which "are the fruits of faith."

The reader will permit me to illustrate the essential difference there is between *primary* and *secondary* causes, by the manner in which David became Saul's son-in-law. The *primary* causes of this event were undoubtedly, on God's part, assisting power and wisdom; and on king Saul's part, a free promise of giving his daughter in marriage to the man, who should kill Goliath. The *secondary* causes [according to the Rev. Mr. Madan's plan] may be divided into *instrumental* and *declarative*. The *instrumental* causes of David's honourable match, were his *faith*, his *sling*, his *stone*, Goliath's *sword*, &c.: And the *declarative* or *evidencing* causes, were his *works*. He rests upon fight-

ing.

faith is the secondary, subordinate cause of our acceptance *as penitent sinners*; in the day of judgment *works*, even the works of faith, will be the secondary subordinate cause of our acceptance *as persevering saints*. Let us therefore equally decry dead faith and dead works, equally recommend living faith and its important fruits.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to check the rapid progress of speculative antinomianism, that perpetually decries works, and centers in the following paragraph, which presents without disguise the doctrine of the absolute, unconditional perseverance of adulterous believers, and incestuous saints.

Saving faith being immortal, can not only subsist without the help of good works; but no aggravated crimes can give it a finishing stroke. A believer may in cool blood murder a man, after having seduced his wife, without exposing himself to the least real danger of forfeiting either his heavenly inheritance, or the divine favour: because his *salvation*, which is *finished in the full extent of the word*, without any of his good works, cannot possibly be frustrated by any of his evil ones.

It will not be improper now to attempt a check to pharisaism, which perpetually opposes faith, and whose destructive errors collected in one position may
run

ing the giant, he renounces carnal weapons, puts on the armour of God, runs to meet his adversary, slings a fortunate stone, brings his adversary down, flies upon him, and cuts off his head. By *these* works he was *evidenced* a person duly qualified to marry the princess; or, to keep to the Rev. Mr. Madan's expression, "*by*" these "*works*" he was "*declaratively*" judged a man fit to be rewarded with the hand of the princess. Now is it not clear, that his *works*, upon the *evidence* of which he received such a reward, had as important a part in his obtaining it, as the faith and sling by whose *instrumentality* he wrought the works? And is it not strange that the Rev. Mr. Madan should be an orthodox divine, when he says, that "*we are declaratively justified by works*," and that Mr. Wesley should be a dreadful heretick for saying, that we are *saved not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition*; or in other terms, that we are finally justified not by works as the *primary, meritorious* cause; but as a *secondary, evidencing, declarative* cause?

run thus :—If people perform external acts of worship towards God, and of charity towards their neighbour ; their principles † are good enough : and should they be faulty, these good works will make ample amends for that deficiency. — Upon this common plan of doctrine, if the filthy sepulchre is but whitewashed, and the noisome grave adorned with a flowery turf, it little matters what is within, whether it be *a dead man's bones*, a dead heart swelled with pride, or *all manner of corruption*.

It is hard to say, who do christianity most disservice, the solifidians, who assert that works are nothing *before God* ; or the pharisees, who maintain that certain religious ceremonies, and external duties of morality are the very soul of religion. O thou, true believer, bear thy testimony against both their errors ; and equally contend for the tree and the fruit, the faith of St. Paul and the works of St. James ; remembering that if ever the gates of hell prevail against thee, it will be by making thee over-value faith and despise good works, or over-rate works and slight *precious faith*.

The world, I grant, is full of Gallios, easy or busy men, who seldom trouble themselves about faith or works, law or gospel. Their latitudinarian principles perfectly agree with their loose conduct : and if their volatile minds are fixed, it is only by a steady adherence to such commandments as these : “ Be not righteous over much : — Get and spend : — Marry or be given in marriage : — Eat and drink : — Lie down to sleep and rise up to play : — Care neither for heaven nor hell : — Mind all of earth but the awful spot allotted thee for a *grave* : &c.” However, while they punctually observe this decalogue, their conscience is

† The ingenious author of a new book, called *Essays on public worship, patriotism, &c* : does not scruple to send such an exhortation abroad into the world. “ Let us substitute honesty instead of faith. “ It is the only foundation of a moral character, and it ought to be “ the only test of our religion. It should not signify what, or how “ little a man believed, if he was honest. — This would put “ christianity upon the best footing.” See the *Monthly Review* for March 1773.

is sometimes awakened to a sense of corroding guilt, commonly called uneasiness, or low spirits: and if they cannot shake it off by new scenes of dissipation, new plunges into sensual gratifications, new schemes of hurrying business; if a religious concern fastens upon their breasts, the Tempter deludes them, by making his false coin pass for the *gold tried in the fire*. If his dupes will have *faith*, he makes them take up with that of the *antinomians*. If they are for *works*, he recommends to them those of the *self-righteous*. And if some seem cut out to be brands in the church; fiery, persecuting, implacable zealots; he gives them a degree in the university of Babel: One is a *Bachelor* of the science of sophistry, an other a *Master* of the liberal art of calumny, and a third a *Doctor* in human, or diabolical *divinity*: But if all these graduates have not as much *faith* as Simon Magus, or as many *works* as the conceited pharisee; yet they may have as much zeal for the church as the bigot, who set out from Jerusalem for Damascus in pursuit of heretics. They may sometimes pursue those, who dissent from them, even *unto strange cities*.

Has not the world always swarmed with those devotees, who, blindly following after *faith* without loving obedience, or after *obedience* without loving *faith*, have *made havock of the church*, and driven myriads of worldly men to a settled contempt of godliness: while a few, by equally standing up for true *faith* and universal obedience, have alone kept up the honour of religion in the world? Take a general view of the church, and you will see this observation confirmed by a variety of black, bright, and mixt characters.

The first man born of a woman, is a striking picture of perverted mankind. He is at once a fullen pharisee, and a gross antinomian: he sacrifices to God, and murders his brother. Abel, the illustrious type of converted sinners, truly believes, and acceptably sacrifices. *Faith* and *works* shine in his life with equal lustre; and in his death we see what the godly
may

may expect from the *impious* church and the *pious* world. Protomartyr for the doctrine of *this* check, he falls the first innocent victim to *pharisaical* pride and *antinomian* fury. *The sons of God mix with the daughters of men, learn their works, and make shipwreck of the faith.* Enoch nevertheless truly believes in God, and humbly walks with him : *Faith* and *works* equally adorn his character. The world is soon full of *misbelief*, and the earth of *violence*. Noah however believes and works : he credits God's word, and builds the ark. This *WORK* *condemns the world, and he becomes heir of the righteousness which is by FAITH.*

Consider Abraham ; see how he believes and works ! God speaks, and he leaves his house, his estate, his friends, and native country. His faith works by love : he exposes his life to recover his neighbour's property, he readily gives up to Lot his right of choice to prevent a quarrel, he earnestly intercedes for Sodom, he charitably hopes the best of its wicked inhabitants, he gladly entertains strangers, humbly washes their feet, diligently instructs his household, and submissively offers up Isaac his favourite son, the child of his old age, the hope of his family, his own heir, and that of God's promise : *by these works his faith is made perfect*, and he deserves to be called the *Father of the faithful*.

Moses treads in his steps : he believes, quits Pharaoh's court, and suffers affliction with the people of God. Under his conduct the Israelites believe, obey, and cross the red sea with an high hand ; but soon after they murmur, rebel, and provoke divine vengeance. Thus the destruction, which they had avoided in Goshen thro' *obedient faith*, they meet in the wilderness thro' *the works of unbelief*. Nature is up in arms to punish their backslidings. The pestilence, the sword, earthquakes, fiery serpents, and fire from heaven, combine to destroy the ungrateful, antinomian apostates.

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In the days of Joshua, that eminent type of Christ, *faith* and *works* are happily reconciled; and whilst they walk hand in hand, Israel is invincible, the greatest difficulties are surmounted, and the land of promise is conquered, divided, and enjoyed.

Under the next judges faith and works seldom meet; but as often as they do, a deliverance is wrought in Israel. Working believers carry all before them: *They can do all things thro' the Lord strengthening them*: They are little omnipotents: but if they suffer the antinomian Delilah to cut off their locks, you may apply to them the awful words of David (spoken to magistrates, who forsake the way of righteousness): *I have said, Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes*; like Zimri or Corah, Dathan or Abiram.

The character of Samuel, the last of the judges, is perfect. From the cradle to the grave he *believes* and *works*; he serves God and his generation. His sons, like those of Eli, halt in practice, and their faith is an abomination to God and man. David believes, works, and kills the blaspheming Philistine. He slides into antinomian faith, wantonly seduces a married woman, and perfidiously kills an honest man. Solomon follows him in the narrow path of working faith, and in the broad way of speculative and practical antinomianism. The works of the son correspond with those of the father. Happy for him, if the repentance of the idolatrous king, equalled that of his adulterous parent!

In the days of Elijah, the gates of hell seemed to have prevailed against the church. Queen Jezebel had *cut off the prophets of the Lord*, and appointed 400 chaplains to his majesty king Ahab, who shared the dainties of the royal table, and therefore found it easy to demonstrate, that *pleading for Baal* was orthodoxy, and prosecuting honest Naboth as a *blasphemer of God and the king*, was an instance of true loyalty. But even then all were not lost: Seven thousand men shewed
their

their faith by their works ; they firmly believed in Jehovah, and steadily refused bowing the knee to Baal.

In the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, wickedness, persecution, and imaginary good works prevailed under a show of zeal for the temple, and of regard for the people of God. But even then also, there was a *small remnant* of believing and working souls, who set fire to the stubble of wickedness during the pious reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah.

Follow the chosen nation to Babylon. They all profess the faith still : but how few believe and work ! Some do however : and by their *work of faith* and *patience of hope* they *quench the violence of the fire*, and *stop the mouths of lions* : and what is more extraordinary still, they strike with astonishment a fierce tyrant, a Nebuchadnezzar ; they fill with wonder a cowardly king, a Darius : and disarming the former of his rage, the latter of his fears, they sweetly force them both to confess the true God among their idolatrous courtiers, and, throughout their immense dominions.

In the days of Herod the double delusion is at the height. John the baptist boldly bears his testimony against it in the wilderness, and our Lord upon the mount, in the temple, and every where. But alas ! what is the consequence ? By detecting the antinomianism of the pharisees, and the pharisaism of antinomians, he makes them desperate. The spirit of Cain rises with tenfold fury against an innocence so far superior to that of Abel. Pharisees and Herodians must absolutely glut their malice with his blood. He yields to their rage ; and while he *puts away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, he condescends to die a martyr for the right *faith*, and the true *works* : he seals as a dying *priest* the truth of the two gospel axioms, which he had so often sealed as a living *prophet*, and continues to seal as an eternal *Melchisedec*.

The apostles, by precept and example, powerfully enforce their Lord's doctrine and practice. Their lives are true copies of their exhortations : Their deepest sermons are only exact descriptions of their behaviour.

behaviour. It is hard to say which excite men most to *believe* and *obey*, their seraphic *discourses* or their angelic *conduct*. Their labours are crowned with general success. Judaism and heathenism are every where struck at, and fall under the *thunder* of their *words of faith*, and the shining power [might I not say the *lightening*] of their *works of love*. Thus the world is *turned upside down* before faith and works; the times of *refreshing* come from the *presence of the Lord*; and earth, cursed as it is, becomes a paradise for obedient believers.

Hell trembles at the revolution; and before all is lost, *Satan* hastens to *transform himself into an angel of light*. In that favourable disguise, he puts his usual stratagem in execution, against the believing, working, and suffering church. He instills speculative faith, pleads for relaxed manners, puts the badge of contempt upon the daily cross, and gets the immense body of the Gnostics and Laodiceans into his snare. Sad and sure is the consequence. The genuine works of faith are neglected: Idle works of men's invention are substituted for those of God's commandments. And fallen churches, thro' the *smooth* way of antinomianism, return to the *covert* way of pharisaism, or to the *broad* way of infidelity.

Such was the deplorable condition of the western church when Luther appeared. True faith was dethroned by superstitious fancy: and all the works of the former were well nigh choaked by the thorns that sprang from the latter. The zealous reformer with his sharp scythe justly cut them down thro' a considerable part of Germany. His terribly-successful weapon, which had already done some execution in the Netherlands, France and Italy, might have reached Rome itself, if the effects of his unguarded preaching had not dreadfully broke out around him in the North.

There the balance of the evangelical precepts was lost. Solifidianism openly prevailed. Our Lord's sermon upon the mount, and St. James's epistle, were either explained away, or wished out of the bible.

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The amiable, practicable *law of Christ* was perpetually confounded with the terrible, impracticable *law of innocence* : and the avoidable penalties, of the former, were injudiciously represented as one with the dreadful curse of the latter, or with the abrogated ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation. Then the law was publicly wedded to the devil, and poor protestant solidians were taught to bid equal defiance to both.

The effect soon answered the cause. Lawless believers, known under the name of Anabaptists, arose in Germany. They fancied themselves the dear, the elect people of God ; they were compleat in Christ ; their election was absolutely made sure ; all things were theirs ; and they went about in religious mobs to deliver people from *legal bondage*, and bring them into *gospel-liberty*, which, in their opinion, was a liberty to despise all laws divine and human, and to do, every one, what was right in his own eyes. Luther was shocked and cried out ; but the mischief was done, and the reformation disgraced : nor did he perseveringly apply the proper remedy pointed out in the minutes, *salvation not by the merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition*.

Nevertheless he was wise enough to give up the root of the mischief in the Lutheran articles of religion, presented to the Emperor Charles the Vth at Augsburg, whence they were called *the Augsburg-confession*. In the XIIth of those articles, which treats of *repentance*, we find these remarkable words, "*We teach touching repentance, that those who have sinned after baptism, may obtain the forgiveness of their sins AS OFTEN AS they are converted,*" &c. Again, "*We condemn the Anabaptists, who say, that those who have been once justified can no more lose the holy spirit.*"

This doctrine clearly opened, and frequently enforced, might have stopped the progress of antinomianism. But alas ! Luther did not often insist upon it, and sometimes he seemed even to contradict it. In the mean time Calvin came up ; and tho' I must do him the justice to acknowledge, that he seldom went

the length of modern Calvinists in speculative antinomianism, yet he made the matter worse by advancing many unguarded propositions about absolute decrees, and the necessary, final perseverance of backsliding believers.

This doctrine, which, together with its appendages, so nicely reconciles Baal and free Grace ; a *little*, or [if the backslider is so minded] a *good deal* of the world, and heaven ; this flesh-pleasing doctrine, which slyly parts *faith* and *works*, while it decently unites *Christ* and *Belial*, could not but be acceptable to injudicious and carnal Protestants : and to make it pass with others, it was pompously decorated with the name of *the doctrine of grace* ; and *free grace-preachers*, as they called themselves, insinuated that St. James's doctrine of *Faith being dead without works*, was a doctrine of wrath, an uncomfortable antichristian doctrine, which none but "proud justiciaries" and rank papists could maintain. Time would fail to mention all the books that were *indirectly* written against it ; or to relate all the abuse that was *indirectly* thrown upon these two propositions of St. Paul, *Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap*, and *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*.

Let it suffice to observe, that by these means the hellish sower of antinomian tares prevailed. Thousands of *good* men were carried away by the stream. And, what is more surprising still, not a few of the *wise* and *learned*, favoured, embraced, and defended the antinomian delusion.

Thus what Luther's solifidian zeal had begun, and what Calvin's predestinarian mistakes had carried on, was readily completed by the synod of Dort ; and the antinomianism of *many* protestants, was not less confirmed by that assembly of calvinistic divines ; than the pharisaism of *many* papists, had been before by the council of Trent,

It is true that as some good men in the church of Rome, have boldly withstood pharisaical errors, and openly pleaded for salvation by grace thro' faith : so
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some good men in the protestant churches have also steadily resisted antinomian delusions and publicly defended the doctrine of salvation, not by the proper merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition. But alas ! as the Popes of Rome crushed, or excommunicated the former, almost as fast as they arose ; so have petty protestant Popes blackened, or silenced the latter. The true Quakers, from their first appearance, have made as firm a stand against the Antinomians, as the Waldenses against the Papists ; and it is well known that the Antinomians, who went from England to America with many pious puritans, whipt the Quakers, men and women, cut off their ears, made against them a law of banishment upon pain of death, and upon that tyrannical law hanged four of their preachers, three men and one woman † in the last century, for preaching up the christian perfection of faith and obedience, and so disturbing the peace of the elect, who were *at ease in Zion*, or rather in *Babel*.

I need not mention the title of *heretic*, with which that learned and good man Arminius is to this day dignified, for having made a firm and noble stand against wanton Free Grace. The banishment or deprivation of Grotius, Episcopius, and other Dutch divines, is no secret. And it is well known that in England Mr. Baxter, Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Sellon are to this day *an abhorrence to all antinomian flesh*.

I am sorry to say, that, all things considered, these good men have been treated with as much severity by protestant antinomians ; as ever Luther, Melancthon and Calvin were by popish pharisees : The antinomian and pharisaic spirit run as much into one, as the two arms of a river that embraces an island : If they divide for a time, it is only to meet again, and encrease their mutual rapidity. I beg leave to speak my whole mind. It is equally clear from scripture

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† Their names were William Leddra, Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson, and Mary Dyer. See *The history of the Quakers*, by Sewell ; and *New England judged*, by George Bishop.

and reason, that we must *believe*, in order to be saved consistently with God's *mercy*; and that we must *obey*, in order to be saved consistently with his *holiness*. These propositions are the immoveable basis of the two gospel-axioms. Now if I reject either of them, it little matters which. If I blow my brains out, what signifies it, whether I do it by clapping the mouth of a pistol to my *right* or to my *left* temple?

Error moves in a circle : extremes meet in one. A warm, popish pharisee, and a zealous, protestant antinomian, are nearer each other than they imagine. The one will tell you, that by going to mass and confession; he can get a fresh absolution from the priest for any sin that he shall commit : the other, whose mistake is still more pleasing to flesh and blood, assures you that he has already got an eternal absolution, so that "under every state and circumstance he can possibly be in, he is justified from all things, his sins are for ever and for ever cancell'd."

But if they differ a little in the idea of their imaginary privileges, they have the honour of agreeing in the main point. For, altho' the one makes a great noise about *faith* and *free grace*, and the other about *works* and *true charity*, they exactly meet in *narrow grace* and *despairing uncharitableness*. The pharisee in Jerusalem asserts, that "out of the Jewish church there can be no salvation," and his companions in self-election heartily say *amen* ! The pharisee in Rome declares, that "there is no salvation out of the apostolic, Romish church," and all the catholic elect set their seal to the antichristian decree. And the antinomian in London *insinuates* [for he is ashamed to speak quite out in a protestant country] that there is no salvation out of the Calvinistic, predestinarian church. Hence, if you oppose his principles in ever so rational and scriptural a manner, he supposes that you are "quite dark," that all your holiness is "*self-made*," and all your "*righteousness a cobweb spun by a poor spider out of its own bowels* : " and if he allows you a chance for your salvation, it is only upon a supposition,

supposition, that you may yet repent of your opposition to his errors, and turn Calvinist before you die. But might not an inquisitor be as charitable? Might he not hope that the poor heretic, whom he has condemned to the flames, may yet be saved, if he cordially kisses a crucifix, and says *Ave Maria* at the stake?

And now, candid reader, look around, and see what these seemingly opposite errors have done for Christ's church. Before the reformation, christendom was overspread with superstition and fanaticism; and since, with lukewarmness and infidelity. But let us descend to particulars.

What has *Pharisaism* done for the church of Rome? It has publicly rent from her all the protestant kingdoms, and secretly turned against her an innumerable multitude of deists: for while bigots continue ridiculous bigots still; men of wit, headed by ingenious infidels, continually pour undeserved contempt upon christianity, thro' the deserved wounds which they give to popery. They represent Christ's rational and humane religion as one of the worst in the world, unjustly charging it with the persecuting spirit, and horrible massacres of those *Catholics* so called, who mangling the truth, and running away with one half of the body of christian divinity, disgrace the whole by childish fooleries, and worse than barbarian uncharitableness.

And what does *Pharisaism* for the protestant churches? So far as it prevails, spreads it not around its fatal leaven, a general indifference about heart-felt religion? Turns it not the lively oracles of God into a dead letter, the sacraments into empty ceremonies, the means of grace into rattles to quiet a guilty conscience with, the precious blood of Christ into a *common thing*, his hallowed cross into an inglorious tree, external devotion into a cloak for secret hypocrisy; and some acts of apparent benevolence into the rounds of a ladder, the bottom of which reaches hell.

and behold spiritual fiends [all manner of diabolical tempers] are seen continually *ascending and descending on it* ?

Does it not incline us to despise those who are eminently pious, as if they were out of their senses ; to despair of those who are notoriously wicked, as if they were absolute reprobates ; and to prefer a popular imitator of Barabbas, to a meek follower of Jesus ? Does it not prompt us to lay an undue stress upon trifles, and to make an endless ado about some frivolous circumstance of external worship, while we *pass over judgment, mercy, and the love of God* ? And by that means, does it not confirm modern Herodians in their *antinomianism*, and modern Sadducees in their *infidelity* ? In a word, does it not render the stiff neck stiffer, the blind understanding blinder, the hard heart stouter, the proud spirit more rebellious, more indifferent about mercy, more averse to gospel-grace, more satanical, readier for all the *curses* of the law, and riper for all the *woes* of the gospel ?

But let us consider the other extreme. What has *Calvinism* done for Geneva ? Alas ! it has in a great degree shock'd and driven it into arianism, socinianism, and infidelity. See the account lately given of it in the *French Encyclopedia : Article Geneva*.
 “ Many of the clergy of Geneva [says judicious Mr.
 “ D’Alembert] no longer believe the divinity of Jesus
 “ Christ, of which Calvin their leader was a zealous
 “ defender, and for which he had Servetus † burned,
 “ &c.

† Servetus’s heresy is thus described in the xivth of the xl *Articles of religion*, which the ministers of Geneva still subscribe, and which, if I mistake not, were drawn up by Calvin himself. “ We likewise
 “ detest the devilish imaginations of Servetus, who attributes to our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ an imaginary divinity ; for as much as he says,
 “ that he is the *idea and pattern of all things* ; and calls him God’s
 “ son in a personal or formal manner ; and moreover supposes him to
 “ have a body made up of three uncreated elements, thus mixing and
 “ destroying both the natures of Christ.” This heresy of Servetus, which we may well suppose is not placed here in the most favourable light, does not differ much from the sentiment of those English di-
 vines,

“ &c : — They believe that there are punishments
 “ in an other world, but only for a limited time ;
 “ thus purgatory, which was one of the chief causes
 “ of the reformation, is now the only punishment
 “ which many protestants admit after death. A new
 “ proof this, that man is a being full of contradic-
 “ tions. To sum up all in one word, the religion of
 “ many pastors at Geneva is *perfect Socinianism*.”

What good has *Calvinism* done in England ? Alas !
 very little. When a bow is bent beyond its proper
 degree of tension, does it not fly to pieces ? When you
 violently pull a tree towards the west, if it recovers
 itself, does it not violently fly to the east ? Has not
 this generally been the case with respect to all the
 truths of God, which have been forced out of their
 scriptural place one way or another ? Calvinism in
 the days of O. Cromwell, was at the very same height
 of splendor, at which Popery had attained in the days
 of king Henry the VIIIth, and they share the same
 downfall. *Mole vaunt sua*. At the reformation the
 FIRST grand doctrine of christianity, [*salvation by
 grace thro' faith*] which had been forced out of its
 place, and almost broken by the papists, fled back
 upon them with such violence, that it shook the holy
 see, frightened the Pope, and made some of the richest
 jewels fall from his triple crown. In like manner the
 SECOND grand doctrine of christianity [*salvation not
 by the proper merit of works, but by the works of faith
 as a condition*] which had been served by the antino-
 mians just as the first gospel axiom by the papists,
 recovering itself out of their hands, flew back upon
 them

vines, who have considered the Father as the one self existent Unity,
 and the Son as the one infinite variety in this eternal Unity : so that,
 of course, something in him is the *idea* and *pattern* of all that exists,
 except sin and the curse. Nor is what Dr. Watts says of the super-
 angelical nature of the Logos, and of his appearing in an angelical
 body before his incarnation, so very far from Servetus's doctrine of
 Christ's spiritual and wonderful body, when he appeared as an angel
 to the patriarchs. See the sermons of Peter Sterry, fellow of Ema-
 nuel College, Cambridge, on Psalm xlv. 1, 2. And Dr. Watts's 4th
 dissertation concerning the Trinity.

them with uncommon violence at King Charles's restoration, by an *indirect* blow shook two thousand Calvinist-ministers out of their pulpits ; and getting far beyond its scriptural place, began to bear hard upon, and even thrust out the grand doctrine of *salvation by grace*. Thus the absurdity and mischief of antinomianism, began to drive again the generality of English protestants into Pharisaism, Arianism, Socinianism, or open infidelity ; that is, into the state, in which most of the learned are at Rome and Geneva.

I grant that near forty years ago, some clergymen from the university of Oxford returned to the principles of the reformation, and zealously contended again for *salvation by grace* and for *universal obedience*. By the divine blessing upon their indefatigable endeavours, *Faith* and *Works* met again, and for some time walked undisturbed together. A little revolution then took place : *Practical Christianity* revived, and leaning upon her fair daughters *Truth* and *Love*, took a solemn walk thro' the kingdom, and gave a foretaste of heaven to all that cordially entertained her.

She might, by this time, have turned this favourite isle into a land flowing with spiritual milk and honey, if Apollyon disguised in his angelic robes, had not played, and did not continue to play his old game. Nor does he do it in vain. By his insinuations men of a contrary turn rise against *Practical Christianity*. Many of the devout call her *Heresy*, and many of the gay name her *ramp Enthusiasm*. In the mean time she drops a tear of tender pity, prays for her mistaken persecutors, and quietly retires into the wilderness. *Lean Obedience* is soon driven after her to make more room for speculative *Faith*, who is so highly fed with luscious food and wild honey, that she is quite bloated, and full of humours. Nay, in some she is degenerated into an impatient quarrelsome something, which calls itself *Orthodoxy*, or *the Truth*, and must be treated with the greatest respect ; while *Charity*, cold, sickly, and almost starved for want of *work*, is hardly used with common good manners.

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In a word, *Antinomian Christianity* is come, and makes her public entry in the professing church. A foolish virgin, who assumes the name of *Free Grace*, walks before her, and cries, "Bend the knee, bow the heart, and entertain the old, the pure, the only gospel." An ugly black boy called *Free-Wrath*, bears her enormous train, and with wonderful art hides himself behind it. While thousands are taken with the smiles and cheerfulness of *Wanton Free Grace* [for that is the virgin's right name] and for her sake welcome her painted mother; a grey-headed Seer passes by, fixes his keen eyes upon the admired family, sees thro' their disguise, and warns his friends. This is highly resented, not only by all the lovers of the sprightly, alluring maid, but by some excellent people, who, in the simplicity of their hearts, mistake her for the celestial virgin *Astrea*. Mr. H. and Mr. T. two of her champions, fall upon the aged Monitor; and to the great entertainment of the pharisaic and antinomian world, do their best to tread down his honour in the dust.

While they are thus employed, a rough countryman, who had taken the Seer's warning, throws himself full in the way of *Antinomian Christianity*, and tries to stop her in her triumphant march. *Wanton Free Grace* is a little disconcerted at his rudeness, she reddens, and soon shews herself the true sister of *Free-Wrath*. To be revenged of the clown, she charges him with—guess what—A rape: No, but with being great with *the scarlet whore*, and concerned with the *Romish man of sin*. If he is acquitted of these enormities, they say that she is determined to indite him for murder or "*forgery*;" and if that will not do, for highway robbery, or "*execrable Swiss slander*." The mountaineer, who *counts not his life dear*, stands his ground, and in the scuffle discovers the *black boy*, lays fast hold of him, and notwithstanding the good words that he gives one moment, and the floods of invectives, which he pours out the next; he drags him out to public view, and appeals to the christian world. *Et adhuc sub judice lis est.* But

But leaving England, the scene of the present controversy, I ask, What does *Calvinism* at this day for Scotland, where national honours are paid to it, and where for some ages it has passed for the pure gospel? Alas! not much, if we may depend upon the observations of a gentleman of piety and fortune, who went last year with an eminent minister of Christ, to inspect the state of spiritual christianity in the north, and brought back this melancholy account: "The decay of vital religion is yet more visible in Scotland than in England."

Should by this time some of my readers be ready to ask, what *Arminianism* has done for Holland and England; I reply: If by *Arminianism* you mean the pure doctrine of Christ; especially the doctrine of our free justification thro' Christ, by the *instrumentality* of faith in the day of a sinner's conversion, and by the *evidence* of the works of faith afterwards: if you mean, as I do, a system of evangelical truth, in which the two gospel precepts *believe* and *obey* are duly balanced, and *faith* and *works* kept in their scriptural place; I answer that, under Christ, it has done all the good which has been done, not only in Holland and England, but in all Christendom.

Be not then mistaken: When ministers, leaning towards speculative antinomianism, have done good; it has not been by *preaching wanton free grace*, and by *shackling the free gospel*: but by powerfully enforcing *the truth as it is in Jesus*; by crying aloud, "*Believe*,
 " thou lost sinner, and be saved by *grace*—*Obey*,
 " thou happy believer, and evidence thy salvation by
 " *works*—And *whosoever will*, let him come and
 " take of the water of life freely, for *all things* are
 " *now* ready."—So far as they have started aside from this guarded, and yet encouraging gospel, they have pulled down with one hand what they built with the other; they have tried to make up the *pharisaic*, by widening the *antinomian* gap; they have departed from what *we* call *Christianity*, and what *you* are at full liberty to call *Arminianism*, *Baxterianism*, or *Wesleyanism*. To

To return : I observed just now, that antinomianism drives us into *pharisaism*, *socinianism*, and *infidelity* ; but might I not have added *fatalism*, the highest degree of fashionable infidelity ? And after all, what is *fatalism*, in which the greatest infidels unanimously shelter themselves in our day ? Is it not the beginning or the end of high *Calvinism*, whose emblematical representation may be a serpent forming a circle while it bites its tail, with this motto, *In sese volvitur error*, *After a large circuit Error ends where it began* ? If high *Calvinism* is the *head*, is not *Fatalism* the *tail* ?

For my part I shall not wonder, if some of our high predestinarians find themselves before they are aware, even at Hobb's or Voltaire's feet, humbly learning there the horrible lessons of *Fatalism*. Nay, if I am not mistaken, they perfectly agree with the French philosopher in the capital point. One might think that they have converted him to their orthodoxy, or that he has perverted them to his infidelity. Candid reader, judge of it by the following extract of his lecture on *Destiny*.

“ Homer [says he] is the first writer, in whose
 “ works we find the notion of *fate*. It was then in
 “ vogue in his time. Nor was it adopted by the
 “ pharisees, till many years after : for these pharisees
 “ themselves, who were the first men of letters among
 “ the Jews, were not very ancient, &c. But philoso-
 “ phers needed neither the help of Homer, nor that
 “ of the Pharisees, to persuade themselves, that all
 “ things happen by immutable decrees, that *all is*
 “ *fixed, that all is necessary*.” Now for the proof.
 “ Bodies [adds he] tend to the center, pear trees can
 “ never bear pine apples, a man cannot have above
 “ a certain number of teeth” — And directly flying
 from *teeth* to *ideas*, he would have us infer, that
 we can no more arrange, combine, alter, or dismiss
 our ideas than our grinders, and that an adulterer de-
 files his neighbour's bed as *necessarily* as a pear tree pro-
 duces pears. — He even adds, “ If thou couldst alter
 “ the destiny of a fly, thou shouldst be more powerful
 “ than

"than God himself." See *Dictionnaire Philosophique portatif*, Londres, 1764. Page 163, 164.

This ingenious infidel is quite as *orthodox* (in the Calvinistic sense of the word) in his article on *Liberty*. "What does then your free will consist in [says he] "if it is not in a power to do *willingly* what *absolute necessity* makes you chuse?" Nay, he is so staunch a predestinarian, so compleat a fatalist, that he maintains, no one can chuse *even or odds* without an irresistible order of all-directing fate. And he concludes by affirming, that all "*liberty of indifference*," that is, all power to do a thing, or to leave it undone at our option, without the necessitating agency of fate, "*is arrant nonsense*." See the same book, page 243, &c.

Thus the most subtle, self-righteous infidel in France by going full east; and the most rigid, thorough-paced antinomian in England by going full west, in the ways of Error, meet at last face to face in the antipodes of Truth. O may the shock caused by their unexpected encounter, wake them both out of their fatal dreams, to call upon him, who *takes the wise in their own craftiness*, imparts true wisdom to the simple, and crowns the humble with grace and glory.

As high *Calvinism* on the left hand falls in with *fatalism*, so on the right hand it runs into the wildest notions of some deluded mystics, and ranting perfectionists. Judicious reader, you will be convinced of it by the following propositions, advanced by Molinos,† the father of the mystics and perfectionists, who are known abroad under the name of *Quietists*. These positions, among many others, were condemned by the Pope as "rash, offensive to pious ears, erroneous, scandalous, &c." I extract them from the Bull of his Holiness, given at Rome 1687, and published by the Archbishop of Cambray at the end of his book called *Instruction pastorale*, printed at Amsterdam 1698. See page 192, &c.

† He was a pious, but injudicious clergyman of the church of Rome, who, in some of his works, spoiled the doctrine of *grace* by Calvinistic refinements; and that of *christian perfection* by antinomian rant.

“ *Velle operari active est Deum offendere, qui vult esse solus agens, &c.* To be willing to be active and work, is to offend God, who will be the sole agent, &c. — Our natural activity stands in the way of grace, and hinders the divine operation and true perfection, *quia Deus vult operari in nobis sine nobis*, because God will work in us without us. — The soul ought not to think upon rewards and punishments. — We must leave to God the caring of all that concerns us, that he may do in us, without us, his divine will. — He that will be resigned to God’s will, must not ask him any thing, because petitions savour of our own will, and therefore are imperfect;” [or, to speak in the Calvinistic way, *sinful*.]

Again, “ God, to humble and transform us, permits and wills, that the devil should do violence to the bodies of some perfect souls” [*i. e. established believers*] “ and should make them commit carnal actions against their will. — God now sanctifies his saints by the ministry of devils, who by causing in their flesh the above-mentioned violent impulses, makes them despise themselves the more, &c. — St. Paul felt such violent impulses in his body: hence he wrote, *The good that I would, I do not; and the evil which I would not, I do.* These violent impulses are the best means to humble the soul to nothing, and to bring it to true holiness, and the divine union; there is no other way, *et hæc est via facilius et tutior*, and this is the easier and the safer way — David, &c. suffered such violent impulses to external impure actions, &c.”

Who does not see here some of the most absurd tenets, or dangerous consequences of Calvinism! Man is a mere machine in the work of salvation — The body of holy Paul is sold under sin — David in Uriah’s bed is complete and perfect in Christ — Actual adultery humbles believers, and is an excellent mean of sanctification, &c.

D

When

When we see antinomianism thus defiling the sounder part of the Romish and Protestant churches ; when the god of this world avails himself of these “ antinomian dotages ” to confirm myriads of stiff pharisees in their self-righteous delusions ; and when the bulk of men, shocked at the glaring errors of both, run for shelter to deism, and gross infidelity ; who would not desire to see the doctrines of *faith* and *works*, *grace* and *obedience* so stated and reconciled, that *men of reason* might no longer be offended at christianity ; nor *men of religion* one at another ?

This is again attempted in the following discourse, the substance of which was committed to paper many years ago, to convince the pharisees and papists of my parish, that there is no salvation by the faithless works of the law, but by a living faith in Jesus Christ. With shame I confess, that I did not *then* see the need of guarding the doctrine of *faith*, against the despisers of *works*. I was chiefly bent upon pulling up the tares of pharisaism : Those of antinomianism were not yet sprung up in the field, which I began to cultivate : or my want of experience hindered me from discerning them. But since, what a crop of them have I perceived and bewailed !

Alas ! they have in a great degree ruined the success of my ministry. I have seen numbers of lazy seekers, enjoying the dull pleasure of sloth on the couch of wilful unbelief, under pretence that God was to do all in them without them. I have seen some lie flat in the mire of sin, absurdly boasting that they could not fall ; and others make the means of grace, means of idle gossiping or sly courtship. I have seen some turn their religious profession into a way of gratifying covetousness or indolence ; and others, their skill in church-music, their knowledge, and their zeal, into various nets to catch esteem, admiration, and praise. Some have I seen making *yesterday's* faith a reason to laugh at the cross *to-day* ; and others drawing from their misapprehensions of the atonement, arguments to be less importunate in secret prayer and
more

more conformable to this evil world, than once they were. Nay, I have seen some professing believers backward to do those works of mercy, which I have sometimes found persons, who made no profession of godliness, quite ready to perform. And Oh! tell it in Sion, that watchfulness may not be neglected by believers, that fearfulness may seize upon backsliders, and that trembling may break the bones of hypocrites and apostates; I have seen those, who had equally shined by their gifts and graces, strike the moral world with horror by the grossest antinomianism; and disgrace the doctrine of *salvation thro' faith*, by the deepest plunges into scandalous sin.

Candid Reader, I need say no more, to make *thee* sensible of the necessity of the *additions* and *notes*, by which I have strengthened and guarded my old discourse, that it might be an *EQUAL Check to pharisaism and antinomianism*, an equal prop to *faith* and *works*. If it affords thee any edification, give God the glory, and pray for the despised author. Ask in the words of good Bishop Hopkins, that I may so *BELIEVE, so rest on the merits of Christ, as if I had never wrought any thing; and withal so WORK, as if I were only to be saved by my own merits*. And O! ask it again and again, for I find it *a difficult thing, to give to each of these its due in my practice*. It is the very depth and height of christian perfection.

END OF THE ESSAY.



D 2

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

Madeley, Jan. 10, 1774.

ABOVE fifteen years ago I looked into Baxter's Aphorisms on Justification, and thro' prejudice or sloth I soon laid them down, as being too deep for me. But a few days since a friend having brought me Mr. Wesley's extract of them, I have read it with much satisfaction, and present my readers with a compendium of my discourse in the words of those two judicious and laborious divines.

' As there are two covenants, with their distinct conditions ; so is there a two-fold righteousness, and both of them absolutely necessary to salvation. — Our righteousness of the first covenant, is not personal, or consisteth not in any actions performed by us ; for we never personally satisfied the law' [of innocence] ' but it is wholly without us in Christ. In this sense every christian disclaimeth his own righteousness, or his own works — Those only shall be in Christ legally righteous, who believe and obey the gospel, and so are in themselves evangelically righteous — Tho' Christ performed the conditions of the law' [of innocence] ' and satisfied for our non-performance, yet it is ourselves that must perform the conditions of the gospel — These two' [last] ' propositions seem to me so clear, that I do wonder any able divines should deny them : Methinks they should be articles of our creed, and a part of children's catechisms. To affirm that our evangelical or new-covenant righteousness is *in Christ*, and not *in ourselves* ; or performed by Christ, and not by ourselves ; is such a monstrous piece of antinomian doctrine, as no man, who knows the nature and difference of the covenants can possibly entertain.' *Bax. Aphor. Prop: 14, 15, 16, 17.*

Salvation

Salvation by the Covenant of Grace :

A

DISCOURSE

ON ROMANS xi. 5, 6.

Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace : And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace : But if it be of works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work.

INTRODUCTION and DIVISION.

THE Apostle complains in the preceding chapter, that Israel was blinded, and did not see the way of salvation : *I bear them record*, says he, Rom. x, 2, *that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge ; for being ignorant of God's righteousness, i. e. of God's way of saving sinners † merely thro' Jesus Christ, and going about to establish their own righte-*

D 3

eousness,

(1) † When I say that God saves sinners “merely” thro’ Jesus Christ, I do not exclude our *faith*, the *instrumental cause* of our salvation ; nor our *works of faith*, the *evidencing cause* of it ; any more than I exclude divine mercy. I only mean, that Christ is the *primary, meritorious cause* of our justification ; and that from him all *secondary, instrumental causes* receive whatever influence they have towards our eternal salvation. Nor do I take away from the Redeemer’s glory, when I affirm with the Rev. Mr. Madan, that “*we are justified instrumentally, by faith, and declaratively by works ;*” or that faith is the *instrumental*, and works are the *declarative cause* of our complete justification. For as I speak of faith in Christ, *the Light of men and the Saviour of the world* ; and as I mean *the works of that faith* ; I secure his mediatorial honours ; such works being all wrought thro’ *his* influence, perfumed with *his* merits, and accepted thro’ *his* intercession. Christ is then *all in all* still ; the primary and meritorious cause passing thro’ all the secondary, and instrumental causes, as light does thro’ our windows and eyes ; food thro’ our mouths and stomachs ; and vital blood thro’ our arteries and veins.

N. B. The parts of this discourse, which are enclosed in brackets, [] are the additions that guard or strengthen the old sermon which my opponent calls for ; and the parts contained between the two hands, { } are the passages, which he has extracted from it, and published at the end of his Finishing Stroke.

teousness, that is, endeavouring to save themselves by their own good works [so called, by works which, strictly speaking, deserve rather to be named pharisaical than good ;] *they have not submitted to the righteousness of God*—to that faith in Christ, which makes sinners righteous before God : *for Christ*, adds he, *is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4 ; That is, [since the fall] it is the very design of the [Adamic] law, [the law of innocence given to sinless Adam ; yea, and of the Mosaic law, when it is considered as *written in stones*, and decorated with shadows or types of good things to come,] to bring men to believe in Christ for justification and salvation : as he alone gives that pardon and life, which the law [of innocence] shews the want of, [and which the Mosaic law, abstracted from gospel-promises, points unto,] but cannot possibly bestow.

The Apostle resuming the same subject in the chapter out of which the text is taken, comforts himself by considering, that, altho' Israel in general was blinded, yet *all* were not lost. Old Simeon and Anna had *seen the salvation of God*, and had *departed in peace*, Nicodemus, a doctor in Israel, had received the doctrine of the new birth and salvation by faith. *Three thousand* Jews had been *pricked to the heart* by penitential sorrow, and *filled with peace and joy by believing* in Jesus Christ. And *even at this present time*, says the Apostle, *there is a remnant* [of my country-men saved] *according to the election of grace* : That is, There are some of them, who, [like Nathaniel and Nicodemus] casting away their dependance on their own righteousness, [and trusting only in Christ's merits] are numbered among the *elect*, according to that gracious *decree of* [election in Christ, which] God [has so clearly revealed] in the covenant of grace, *He that believeth shall be saved*, &c. Mark xvi. 16. †

From

(2) † My sentiment concerning *election*, is thus expressed by a great Calvinist minister. " In the written word a decree of God is found, " which shews who are the chosen and the saved people ; *He that*
" *believeth*

From thence the Apostle takes occasion to shew, that pardon and salvation are not, in whole or in part, attained by [the covenant of] works, but merely by [the covenant of] grace. *A remnant* of those self-righteous pharisees *is saved*, [not indeed by their self-righteousness,] but by the covenant of grace, [according to which we must equally part with our self-righteousness and our sins.] *And if* by [the covenant of] grace, then *it is no more* [by that] *of works*, whether of the ceremonial law [of Moses,] or of the moral law [of innocence perverted to pharisaic purposes;] *else* [the] grace [of Christ] *is no longer grace* [bestowed upon a criminal:] The very nature of [† gospel-]grace is lost. *And if*

“ *believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* The chosen people therefore are a race of true believers, convinced by God’s spirit of their ruined estate, endowed with divine faith, by which they seek to Christ for help; and seeking do obtain pardon, peace, and holiness.” *The Christian World Unmasked*. Second Edit. p. 186. Judicious christians will probably agree here with this pious divine, if he does not deny: (1) That in the divine decree of election the word BELIEVETH, excludes from the election those who *have cast off their first faith*, or *have made shipwreck of the faith*: And (2) That the word IS BAPTIZED, implies *professing the faith in word and work*; or making, and standing to, the *baptismal* vow, which respects not only believing the articles of the christian faith, but also keeping God’s holy will and commandments.

(3) † I say *gospel-grace*, because it is that which the Apostle means. It may with propriety be distinguished from the *original grace* which Adam had before the fall, and which deists and pharisees still suppose themselves possessed of. Some people imagine, that if our first parents had well acquitted themselves in the trial of their faithfulness, their reward would *not* have been *of grace*; they would (strictly speaking) have *merited* heaven. But this is a mistake. From the Creator to the creature, all blessings are, and must for ever be *of grace*, of *mere* grace. Gabriel himself enjoys heaven thro’ *free grace*. Unless some gracious promise interposes, God may this instant put an end without injustice, not only to his glory, but to his very existence. Should you ask what difference there is, between *original* and *gospel* grace; I answer, that *original*, *Adamic* grace naturally flowed from God, as *Creator* and *Preserver*, to *innocent, happy* creatures. But *gospel* grace, that for which St. Paul so strenuously contends in my text, supernaturally

if it be [by the covenant] of works, then it is no more [by gospel-] grace ; else work is no longer [the] work [of a sinless creature,] but the very nature of it is destroyed [according to the first covenant, which requires perfect conformity to the law in the work, and perfect innocence in the worker.]

As if the Apostle had said, There is something so absolutely inconsistent, between being saved by [the covenant of] grace, and being saved by [that of] works, that if you suppose either, you of necessity exclude the other : for what is given to works [upon the footing of the first covenant,] is [improperly speaking] the payment of a debt [which God, by his gracious promise, contracted with *innocent* mankind without the interposition of a Mediator :] whereas [gospel-] grace implies [not only] a favour [*strictly speaking* unmerited [by us ; but also an atoning sacrifice on the Redeemer's part, and a damnable demerit on our own :] so that the same benefit cannot, in the very things, be derived from both [covenants.]

Having thus opened the context, I proceed to a more particular illustration of the text ; and that I may explain it as fully, as the time allotted for this discourse will permit,

FIRST, I shall premise an account of the two covenants : The covenant of *works*, to which the pharisees of old trusted, and [most of] the Roman catholics, with too many false protestants, still trust in our days : — And the covenant of *grace*, by which alone

a

turally flows from God, as *Redeemer* and *Comforter*, to *guilty, wretched* mankind : And here let us take notice of the opposition there is, between pharisaic and evangelical obedience, between *the works of the law* and *the works of faith*. The former are done with a *proud conceit* of the *natural strength*, which man lost by the fall ; and the latter, with an *umble dependence* on divine mercy thro' the Redeemer's merits ; and on the *supernatural power* bestowed upon lost mankind for his sake. When St. Paul decries the works of the law, it is merely to recommend the works of faith : and yet, O the dreadful effects of confusion ! in Babel people suppose, that he pours equal contempt upon both.

a remnant was saved in St. Paul's time, and will be saved in all ages.

SECONDLY, I shall prove, that the way of salvation BY [obedient] FAITH ONLY, or, which is the same thing, BY THE COVENANT OF GRACE, is the ONLY WAY that leads to life, according to the scriptures and the articles of our church, to whose holy doctrine I shall publicly set my seal.

THIRDLY, I shall endeavour to show the unreasonableness and injustice of those, who accuse me of "preaching against good works" when I [decry pharisaic works, and] preach salvation thro' the covenant of grace only.

FOURTHLY and lastly, after having informed you, why [even] good works [truly so called] cannot † [properly] deserve salvation in whole or in part; I shall answer the old objection of [some ignorant] papists; [and pharisaical protestants:] "If good works cannot † [properly merit us heaven,] why should we do them? There is no need to trouble ourselves about any."

FIRST

(4) † I prefer *properly* to *absolutely*, the word which I formerly used; because *absolutely* bears too hard upon the second gospel axiom, and turns out of the gospel the *rewardable* condescency, that our *whole* obedience, even according to Dr. Owen, *bath* unto eternal life, thro' God's gracious appointment.

(5) † I say now *properly merit us heaven*, and not *save us*, *get us heaven*, or *procure us heaven*, expressions which occur a few times in my old sermon; because [taking the word *merit* in its full and proper sense] the phrase "*cannot merit us heaven*," leaves room to defend the necessity of evangelical obedience, and of the works of faith, by which we shall be saved, not indeed as being the first and properly meritorious cause of our salvation, (for to ascribe them that honour would be to injure free grace, and place them on the Mediator's throne) but as being the secondary instrumental *cause* of our justification *in the great day*, and consequently of our eternal salvation.

Nor does the expression *properly merit us heaven* clash with such scriptures as these — *When the wicked man turneth from his iniquity, he shall save his soul alive — Save some with fear — Save thy husband — Save thy wife — We are saved by hope — Work out your own salvation. — He that converteth a sinner shall save a soul from death — Thy faith bath saved thee — In doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

FIRST PART.

I begin by laying before you an account of the two [grand] covenants, that God entered into with man. The first was made with Adam, when he was in a state of innocence in paradise. The condition of it, which is excessively hard, [nay, absolutely impossible] to fallen man, was easy before the fall. It runs thus :

Do

thet. A preacher should do justice to every part of the scripture. Nor should he blunt one edge of the sword of the spirit, under pretence of making the other sharper. This I inadvertently did some times in the year 1762. May God endue me with wisdom that I may not do it it in 1774 ! I find it the nicest thing in practical, as well as in polemical divinity, so to defend the doctrine of God's *free grace* as not to wound that of man's *faithful obedience*, and vice versa. These two doctrines support the two gospel axioms, and may be called the *breasts* of the church. A child of God, instead of peevishly biting the one or the other, should suck them alternately : and a minister of Christ, instead of cutting off either, should carefully protect them both.

Should any one object, that If Calvinism is supported by the Rev. Mr. Bettridge's distinction between *Ir* and *Ir* [see the fifth Check, 2d part:] the gospel-axioms, about which we make so much ado, have not a better foundation ; since they depend upon a distinction between *original merit* and *derived merit*. I reply, that the distinction between legal *Ir* and evangelical *Ir*, is unworthy of Christ, and not less contrary to scripture, than to reason, and morality. On the contrary, the distinction between *original* or proper merit, and *derived* or improper worthiness, far from being frivolous, is scriptural, [see IV Check, p. 65, &c.] solid, highly honourable to Christ, greatly conducive to morality, very rational, and lying within the reach of the meanest capacity.

This will appear from the following propositions, which contain the sum of our doctrine concerning merit.—(1) All *proper* worthiness, merit, or desert of any divine reward, is in Christ, the overflowing fountain of all original excellence. — (2) If any of the living water of that rich spring is received by faith, and flows thro' the believer's heart and works, it forms *improper* worthiness, or *derived* merit ; because, *properly speaking*, it is Christ's merit still. — (3) *Original* merit answers to the *first* gospel axiom, and *derived* worthiness to the *second*. (4) According to the first covenant we can never merit a reward, because, of ourselves as sinners, we deserve nothing but hell ; and that covenant makes no provision of merit for hell-deserving sinners.—But (5) according to the second covenant, by God's gracious appointment and merciful promise, we can, *improperly speaking*, be worthy of heaven, thro' the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our hearts, and thro' his righteousness derived to us and to our works by faith. — (6) Hence it.

Do this [thou sinless man] and live: The [innocent] man that does these things, shall live by them, Rom. x. 5. That is, "If thou [who art now a guiltless, holy and "perfect creature] yieldest a constant, universal, and "perfect obedience to the moral law," now summed
up

it is, that God will give some, namely impenitent murderers, blood to drink, *for they are worthy*, they PROPERLY deserve it; while others, namely, penitent believers, shall walk with Christ in white, *for they are worthy*, they IMPROPERLY merit it. Rev. xvi. 6. and iii. 4.

An illustration taken from a leaden pipe full of water, may show how it is possible, that *unworthy* man should become *worthy*, thro' the righteousness which Christ supplies believers with. Strictly speaking, water does not belong to a pipe, any more than merit or worthiness to a believer: for a pipe is only a number of *dry* sheets of lead soldered together: But if that *dry*, leaden pipe really receives some of the water, which a river supplies; I make myself ridiculous by asserting, that the man who hints, there is water in the pipe, confounds the elements, seeks to dry up the river, and is guilty of a dreadful philosophical heresy.

However, if our prepossessed brethren feel an invincible aversion to our Lord's word [*αξιος*] *meriting*, we are willing to become all things to them for his sake. If it may be a means of restoring tranquillity to their minds, we cheerfully consent to use only the word of our translators *worthy*; and here I give full leave to my readers, whenever they meet the noun *merit* or the verb *to merit* in my Checks, to read *worthiness* instead of the one, and *to be worthy* instead of the other. It may indeed puzzle unbiassed persons to find a difference between those expressions; but no matter. If others will expose their prejudice, we ought not only to maintain the truth, but to show our condescension. The word *Merit* is absolutely nothing to Mr. Wesley and me; but the doctrine of faithful obedience in Christ, and of the gracious rewards with which it shall be crowned for his sake, contains all our duty on earth, and draws after it all our bliss in heaven. Therefore, only grant us *truly* the second gospel-axiom: — grant us, that God has not appointed his creatures to endless *punishments* and heavenly *rewards* out of mere caprice: — grant us, that, while the wicked shall PROPERLY and LEGALLY DESERVE their own (and not Adam's) place in hell, the righteous shall *improperly* and *evangelically* BE WORTHY TO OBTAIN THAT WORLD, where they *shall be equal to the angels*, Luke xx. 35: — grant us that man is in a state of probation, and shall be recompensed *for*, and *according to what he has done in the body*, whether it be good or bad: — In a word, grant us the capital doctrine of a day of retribution, in which *God shall judge the world in wisdom and righteousness*, not in solemn folly or satanical hypocrisy; and we ask no more. — This note is a key to all the doctrines, which we maintain in the Minutes, and explain in the Checks.

up in the ten commandments, "thou shalt be rewarded with glory and heaven. But if thou failest in any one particular, whether it be in thought, word, or deed, *thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 17, for the soul *that sinneth it shall die*, Ez. xviii. 4. *The wages of sin is death*, Rom. vi. 23. And *curst is every one, that continueth not in ALL things, written in the book of the law to do them*," Gal. iii. 10.

Nor does this covenant make any allowance for deficiencies, or pass by one transgression great or little, without pronouncing the threatened curse; [for it made no provision for repentance, neither did it offer sinners the help of a sacrificing priest, or interceding mediator.] Whether therefore the sin be murder and adultery, or only eating some forbidden fruit, *its language is, † Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. That is, All the curses denounced against those, who break the covenant of works, hang upon his guilty head, [and will fall upon him in a degree proportionable to the aggravations of his sin.]

This first covenant we have all broken in our first parents, for [*in Adam all die*] — *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. We are then all born [*or conceived*] *in sin*; Psalm li. 5; and consequently *we are by nature children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. But this is not all: this root of original sin, produces in every man many actual iniquities, whereby, as we imitate Adam's rebellion, so we make the guilt of it our own, and fasten the curse attending that guilt upon our own souls. Rom. vii. 24.

Therefore, while we remain in our natural state, [or, to speak more intelligibly, while we continue in sin,

(6) † Whoever reads the scriptures without prejudice, will be of Mr. Burge's mind concerning this awful text. [see IVth Check, p. 42.] It was evidently spoken with reference to *Cbrist's law of liberty*, as well as some of the passages quoted in the preceding paragraph: and if they guard even *that* law; how much more the law of innocence, which, tho' it cannot be holier in its precepts, is yet much more peremptory in its curses!

sin, guilt, and *total* impenitency; we not only trample the covenant of grace under foot, but] we stand upon the [broken] covenant of works; and consequently lie under the dreadful curse, which is already denounced against every transgressor of the law, Gal. 3, 10, [as well as against every despiser of the gospel, Heb. x. 27.]

Hence it is that, *by the deeds of the law*, i. e. by the [unsprinkled] good works commanded in the law [of innocence; or by the ceremonies prescribed in the law of Moses,] *shall no flesh living* [no sinner] *be justified: for as many as are of the works of the law,* [as it stands opposed to the gospel; yea, as many also as rest, like the impenitent pharisees, in the letter of the Mosaic law,] *are under the curse; the scripture having concluded all under sin,* [i. e. testified that all are sinners by conception and practice] and consequently under the curse [of the first covenant,] *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty* [i. e. may humbly confess their fallen and lost estate] *before God,* [and gladly accept his offers of mercy in the second covenant.] Rom. 3, 19, 27.

In this deplorable state of guilt and danger, we [generally] remain careless and insensible, [when we have once taken to the ways of vanity]  making what we call "*the mercy of God*" a pack-horse [if I may use so coarse an expression] to carry us and our sins to heaven, upon the *filthy rags* † of our own [pharisaic] righteousness.  Here we continue, till divine grace awakens us, by the preaching of the gospel, or by some other means. Eph. v. 14. Being then roused to a serious consideration of our fallen state in Adam, and to a sensibility of the curse which we lie under, thro' our numerous breaches of [the second, as well as of] the first covenant; after many fruitless attempts to remove that curse, by fulfilling the law [of innocence;] after many [faithless] endeavours to save ourselves by our own [anti-evangelical] works, and righteousness;  we despair at last of getting to hea-
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(7) † Here that expression is used in the scriptural sense.

ven, by building a babel with the *untempered mortar* of our own [fancied] sincerity, and the bricks of our wretched good works, [or rather of our splendid sins.] ➡ And leaving the impassable road of the covenant of works, we begin to seek [as condemned criminals] the way, which God's free mercy has opened for *lost sinners* in Jesus Christ. Acts ii. 37. Phil. iii. 6. &c.

This *new and living way* [for I may call it by the name which the apostle emphatically gives to the last dispensation of the gospel] Heb. x. 19, 20, is the new covenant, the covenant of grace [in its various editions or dispensations. For, if the Christian edition is called *new* in opposition to the Jewish, all the editions together may well be] called *new*, in opposition to the old covenant, the covenant of works [made with Adam before the fall.] It is also termed *gospel*, that is, *glad tidings*, because [† with different degrees of evidence] it brings comfortable news of free salvation in Christ, to all that see they are undone in themselves.

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(8) † This, and the preceding clauses are added, to guard the doctrine of the gospel-dispensations, of which I had but very confused views eleven years ago. See third Check, p. 10, &c. Leaning *then* too much towards Calvinism, I fancied, at times at least, that *the gospel* was confined within the narrow channel of its last dispensation; which was as absurd as if I had conceited, that the swell of our rivers at high water, is *all the ocean*. But turning to my bible, and "reviewing the whole affair," I clearly see, that the Jewish and Christian gospel are not *the everlasting gospel*, but only two of its brightest dispensations. Should the reader ask me what I mean by *the everlasting gospel*, when I consider it in its full latitude: I answer, that I mean with St. Paul, *The riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, leading men to repentance for Christ's sake, who in all ages is the Saviour of the world.* — Yea, and the severe strokes of his gracious providence *driving* them to it. I dare not insinuate, that Jonah, one of the most successful preachers in the world, was not a *gospel-preacher*, when he stirred up all the people of Nineveh to repentance, by the fear of impending destruction; and that St. John the divine was a stranger to true divinity, when he gave us the following account of the manner, in which a celestial Evangelist preached the everlasting gospel. *I saw an other angel having the EVERLASTING GOSPEL to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,*

☞ The second covenant then, or the gospel, is a dispensation of free grace and mercy [not only to little children, of whom is the kingdom of heaven, but also] to poor, lost, helpless sinners, who, seeing and feeling themselves condemned by the law [of innocence,] and utterly unable to obtain justification upon the terms of the FIRST covenant, come to [a merciful God thro'] Jesus Christ [*the light of men*, according to the helps afforded them in the dispensation, which they are under,] to seek in him [and from him those merits and] that righteousness, which they have not in themselves. For the Son of God, being both God and man in one person; and by the invaluable sacrifice of himself upon the cross, having suffered the punishment due to all our breaches of the law [of works;] and by his most holy life having answered all the demands of the † FIRST covenant, *God can be*

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just.

kindred, and tongue, and people, [Here is free grace!] saying with a loud voice: Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment, as well as of his mercy, is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. Here is, if I am not mistaken, the gospel according to which many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down at the heavenly feast with the Father of the faithful, when the unloving Pharisees shall be thrust out, notwithstanding their great ado about absolute election. This note will probably touch the apple of my reader's eye, if he is a rigid predestinarian. But if he is offended, I intreat him to consider, whether his love does not bear some resemblance to the charity of those strong predestinarians of old, those monopolizers of God's election, who despised poor sinners of the Gentiles. How violent was their prejudice! They vastly admired our Lord's sermon at Nazareth, till he touched the sore that festered in their strait-laced breast. But no sooner did he insinuate, that their election was not yet made sure, and that the poor Pagan widow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian were not absolute reprobates; than they were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong. He had touched their great Diana, and therefore, to be sure, he had committed the unpardonable sin; he had spoken treason, heresy, blasphemy. See Luke iv. 28.

(9) † Altho' there were some very unguarded passages in my original sermon, yet, what was unguarded in one place, was in a great degree guarded in another. Thus *even* in this paragraph, which is the first that Mr. Hill produces in his extract, by saying that *Christ*

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just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, Rom. iii. 26. ☞ Therefore, if a sinner, whose mouth is stopped, and who has nothing to pay, pleads from the heart the atoning blood of Christ [and supposing he never heard that precious name, if according to his light he implores *divine mercy*, for the free exercise of which Christ's blood has made way] not only God will not deliver him to the tormentors, but will frankly forgive him all. Luke vii. 41, &c.

☞ Herein then consists the great difference, between the first and the second covenant. Under the first, an absolute, unfinning, universal obedience in our own persons is required; and such obedience we, [in our fallen state,] can never perform. — Under the second covenant, this obedience [to the law of innocence, payed by, and] in our surety Christ Jesus, when we are united to him by a faith of the operation of God, is accepted instead of our own. ☞ For as our sins were transferred upon the Redeemer's guiltless head, so his merits are brought home to our guilty souls

has answered all the demands of the FIRST covenant for believers, I indirectly assert, that he has not answered the demands of the *second*; and that according to the gospel, we must personally repent, believe and obey to be finally accepted: The covenant of *grace* insisting as much upon *the works of faith*, as the covenant of *works* did upon *the works of the law* of innocence, in order to our continuance and progress in the divine favour. A doctrine this which is the ground of the minutes, the quintessence of the Checks, and the downfall of antinomianism. It was only with respect to the covenant of works, and to the law of innocence, that I said in the next paragraph, transposed by Mr. Hill, "THIS obedience—when we are united to Christ by a "faith of the operation of God, IS ACCEPTED INSTEAD OF OUR "OWN." How greatly then does he mistake me, when he supposes I asserted that the personal, Adamic, and (in one sense) anti-evangelical obedience of Christ, which sprang neither from gospel-faith nor from gospel-repentance, is accepted instead of the personal, penitential, evangelical obedience of believers! It is just here that the Calvinists turn aside from the truth, to make void the law of Christ and follow antinomian dotages. Because Christ has fulfilled the Adamic law of innocence for us, they fancy that he has also fulfilled his own evangelical law of gospel-obedience, according to which we must stand or fall, when by our *works* we shall be justified, and by our *words* we shall be condemned.

souls by the powerful operation of divine grace thro' faith, and being thus *complete in Christ* † [with regard to the fulfilling of the first covenant,] we can rejoice in God, who has made him unto us *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. [I say, with regard to the fulfilling of the first covenant, to guard against the error of thousands, who vainly imagine that Christ has fulfilled the terms of the second covenant for us, and talk of *finished salvation*, just as if our Lord had actually repented of our sins, believed in his own blood, and fulfilled his own evangelical law in our stead; a fatal error this, which makes christians law-

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less,

(10) † If I say that *penitent* believers are *complete* in Christ with respect to the first covenant; I do not intimate that *fallen* believers, who *crucify the Son of God afresh*, may even commit deliberate murder, and remain *complete in him*, or rather (as the original means also) *filled with him*. Far be the horrid insinuation from the pen and heart of a Christian. I readily grant, that true believers are not less dead to the Adamic law of innocence, than to the ceremonial law of Moses; and that, with respect to it, they heartily say as David, *Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*. But mistake me not; I would not insinuate, that they are *lawless*, or only under a *rule of life*, which they may break without endangering their salvation. No; they are *under the law of Christ, the law of liberty, the law of the spirit of life, the royal law of gospel-holiness*; and according to this law, they shall all be rewarded or punished in the day of judgment. Altho' this law admits of repentance after a fall, at least during the day of salvation; and altho' it does not condemn us, for not obeying above our present measure of power; yet it does not make the least allowance for wilful sin, any more than the Adamic law; for St. James informs a believer, that *if he offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. And indeed our Lord's parable confirms this awful declaration. The favoured servant, who had the immense debt of *ten thousand talents forgiven him*, sinned against Christ's law only *in one point*, namely, in refusing to have mercy on his fellow servant, as his Lord had had compassion upon him: and for that *one* offence he was delivered to the tormentors, as notoriously guilty of breaking the whole law of liberty and love. *If he who despised the law of Moses perished under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who despises the law of Christ*. This is the ground of the epistle to the Hebrews: but who considers it? Who believes, that the Son of God will command even the *unprofitable* servant to be cut asunder? *When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith upon the earth?* Lord! help my unbelief.

less, represents Christ as the minister of sin, and arms the antinomian fiend with a dreadful ax, to fell the trees of righteousness, and cut down the very pillars of the house of God.]

From what has been observed it follows, that before any one can believe [to salvation] in the gospel-sense of the word, he must be *convinced of sin* by the spirit of God, John xvi. 8. He must feel himself a guilty, lost, and helpless sinner, unable to recover the favour and image of God by his own strength and righteousness: Acts ii. 37, 38.

This conviction and sense of guilt make the sinner *come travelling and heavy laden to Christ*, earnestly claiming the *rest* which he offers to weary souls, Mat. xi. 28. This rest the mourner seeks with the contrite publican, in the constant use of all the means of grace; endeavouring to *bring forth fruit meet for repentance*, till the same spirit, that had convinced him of sin, and alarmed his drowsy conscience, *convinces him also of righteousness*, John xvi. 8, that is, shews him the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's [merits or] righteousness, to swallow up his [† former sins, and] unrighteousness; and the infinite value of Christ's meritorious death, to atone for his [† past] unholy life; enabling him to *believe with the HEART*, and consequently to *feel* [under the christian dispensation] that he has an interest in the Redeemer's blood and righteousness; [or, that he is savingly interested in the merit of all that the Son of God suffered, did, and continues to do for us.]

This lively faith, this *faith † working by love*, is *that which is imputed for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 3, and that

(11) † Without the words *former* and *past*, the sentence learned towards Antinomianism. It gave fallen believers room to conclude, that their *future* or *present* unholy lives were unconditionally atoned for; contrary to St. Paul's guarded gospel, *God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins THAT ARE PAST*. Here is no pleasing innuendo, that the present, or future sins of laodicean backsliders, "are for ever and for ever cancelled."

(12) † This is the very doctrine of the *minutes* and of the *checks*. Is it not astonishing, that Mr. Hill should desire me to publish my *sermon*, as "*the best confutation*" of both!

that whereby a soul is born of God [according to the † christian dispensation of the gospel.] 1 John v. 1. By this faith the [christian] believer being [strongly] united to Christ, as a member to the body, becomes entitled to [a much larger share in] the benefit of all that our Lord did and suffered; and in consequence of this [strong] vital union with him, who is the source of all goodness, he derives a [degree of] power till then unknown, to do good works truly so called: as a graft, which is [strongly] united to the stock that bears it, draws from it new sap, and power to bring forth fruit in [greater] abundance.

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(13) † The judicious reader will easily perceive, that the additions made to this, and some other paragraphs of my old sermon, are intended to guard the inferior dispensations of the gospel. Are there not degrees of saving faith, inferior to the faith of the christian gospel? And are not those degrees of faith consistent with the most profound ignorance of the history of our Lord's sufferings, and consequently with any *explicit* knowledge of the atonement. Altho' mankind in general had some consciousness of guilt, and a confused idea of propitiatory sacrifices; and altho' all the Jewish sacrifices and prophecies pointed to the great atonement; yet how few, even among the pious Jews, seem to have had a clear belief that the Messiah would *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*! How unreasonable is it then to confine the gospel to the explicit knowledge of Christ's atoning sufferings, to which both the prophets and apostles were once such strangers! Does not St. Peter intimate that *the prophets searched, to little purpose, what the Spirit signified, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ; since it was revealed to them, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things, which are now reported in the christian gospel?* 1 Peter i. 11, 12. And how absurd is it to suppose, that nothing is gospel, but a doctrine, which the first preachers of the christian gospel knew little or nothing of, even while they preached the gospel under our Lord's immediate direction? Did not John the Baptist exceed in evangelical knowledge, *all that were born of women*? Were the Apostles much inferior to him, when they had been three years in Christ's school? Did not our Lord say to them, *Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for verily many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that ye hear, and have not heard them?* Again, did he not testify, that in general they had justifying faith, i. e. faith working by love? Did he not say, *Now are ye clean thro' the word which I have spoken unto you*—The Father himself *loveth you, because you have loved me, and believed that I came forth from* God

[O thou, that professest the christian faith, especially,] *shew me thy faith by thy works*, says an Apostle : that is, shew me that thou art grafted in Christ [according to the christian dispensation] by serving God with all thy strength ; by doing all the good thou canst to the souls and bodies of men with chearfulness ; by suffering wrong and contempt with meekness ; by slighting earthly joys, mortifying fleshly lusts, having thy conversation in heaven, and panting every hour after a closer union with Christ, the life of all believers. If thou dost not bring forth these fruits, thou art not a Christian ; thou art not *in Christ a new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. Thou mayest talk of faith, and suppose that thou believest ; but give me leave to tell thee, that [unless thou art in the case of the Eunuch, who

God ? Nay, did he not send them two and two, to preach the gospel of the day : *The kingdom of heaven is at hand : Repent and believe THE GOSPEL* ? And would he have sent them to preach a gospel to which they were utter strangers ? But were they not perfectly strangers to what passes now for the *only* gospel ? Had they the least idea that their Master's blood was to be shed for them, even after he had said, *This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins* ? When he spoke to them of his sufferings, were not they so far from believing in the atonement which he was about to make, that they were offended at the very idea ? Is not this evident from the words of Peter, their chief speaker, who began to rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord : This shall not happen unto thee* : i. e. We do not yet see the need of thy blood ? Nay, when Christ had actually shed it, and the atoning work was finished ; far from having the least notion about what is called "*finished* salvation," and "*gospel*" in our day ; did they not suppose that all their hopes were blasted, saying, *We trusted that it had been he, who should have redeemed Israel*, Luke xxiv. 21 ? Thus the very payment of their ransom, made them despair of redemption : So great was their unacquaintedness with the doctrine of the atonement, notwithstanding their gospel-knowledge, which far exceeded that of most patriarchs and prophets ! From these observations may I not conclude : (1) That an explicit knowledge of Christ's passion and atonement, is the prerogative of the *abrisian* gospel advancing towards perfection ? And (2) that those who make it essential to the *everlasting* gospel, most dreadfully curtain it, and indirectly doom to hell, not only all the righteous Jews, Turks, and Heathens, who may now be alive ; but also almost all the believers, who died before our Lord's crucifixion, and some of the disciples themselves after his resurrection ?

who searched the scriptures even upon a journey ; or of Cornelius, who sought the Lord in alms-givings, and prayer ;] if thou believest at all, [I fear] it is with the drunkard's faith, the whoremonger's faith, the devil's faith, James ii. 19. — From such a faith, may God deliver us, and give us, instead of this counterfeit, *the faith once delivered unto the saints, the mystery of faith kept in a pure conscience !* Get it, O sinner, who bearest a christian name, and Christ and heaven are thine : [but if thou] die without it, [whether it be by continuing in thy present sin and unbelief, or by *making shipwreck of the faith,*] thou diest the second death ; thou sinkest in the bottomless pit for evermore. Mark xvi. 16.

Having thus given you an account of both covenants, and laid before you the *condition* [or term] of each ; namely, for the *first*, a sinless, uninterrupted obedience to all the commands of the holy, spiritual, [and Adamic] law of God, performed by ourselves [without the least mediatorial assistance :] and for the *second*, a lively faith in Christ [*the light of the world*, according to the gospel-dispensation we are under ;] by which faith the virtue of Christ's active and passive obedience to the law [of innocence] being imputed to us, and applied to our hearts, we are made *new creatures, born again, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, without which there can be no lively faith [under any of the divine dispensations :] and having [by that important distinction of the two grand covenants] removed a great deal of rubbish out of the way ; I hope it will not be difficult to prove, under the

SECOND HEAD,

That the way of salvation by such a lively faith only, or, which is the same, by the covenant of grace [alone,] is the one way that leads to life, according to the bible and our articles of religion.

If you ask all the pharisees, all the self-righteous Heathens, Turks, Jews, and Papists in the world, which

which is the way of salvation ? [with too many ignorant Protestants] they will answer, [without making the least mention of repentance and faith] “ Thro’ doing good works, and leading a good life : ” That is, “ Thro’ the covenant of works ; ” flatly contrary to what I have proved in the first part of this discourse ; namely, that *by the works of the law*, by the first covenant, *shall no flesh living be justified*, Gal. ii. 16. Or if they have yet some sense of modesty, if they are not quite lost in pride, [supposing them Christians] they will varnish over the blasphemy [which I fear is indirectly couched under their boasting speech,] with two or three words about God’s mercy. “ Why, say they, “ it is to be hoped, we shall all be saved by endeavouring to lead good lives, and do good works : “ And if that will not do, God’s mercy in Christ will “ do the rest.” Which means neither more nor less than this : “ We are still to be saved by the covenant “ of works, by putting on, [sinful and guilty as we “ are,] the robe of our own [pharisaic, anti-evangelical, Christless] righteousness ; and if it happen to “ be too short, or to have some holes, Christ [whom “ we are willing to make the *omega*, but not the *alpha* ; “ the *last*, but not the *first*,] will in mercy tear his “ spotless robe [of merits,] to patch up and lengthen “ ours.” [And this they say, it is to be feared, without the least degree of *genuine* repentance towards God, and *heart-felt* faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.] O how many dream of getting to heaven in this fool’s coat, [this absurd dress of a christian Pharisee !] How many, by thus blending the two covenants, which are as incompatible as fire and water, try to make for themselves a third covenant, that never existed but in their proud imagination ! In a word, how many are there, who say or think : We must be saved partly by [the covenant of] works, and partly by [the covenant of] grace ! giving the lie to God and my text ! overturning at once the gospel and protestantism ! — No, no : if *a remnant is saved*, it is by the covenant of [gospel-]grace ; and if by [gospel-]grace, then it is

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no more [by the covenant] of works ; otherwise grace is no more [gospel-]grace. But if it be [by the covenant] of works, then it is no more [gospel-]grace ; otherwise work is no more [anti-evangelical] work : [for the moment obedience is *the work of faith*, it can no more be opposed to faith and gospel-grace, than the fruit of a tree can be opposed to the tree, and the sap by which it is produced.]

But, *to the law and the testimony !* Do the oracles of God, or the writings of our Reformers, direct us for salvation to the covenant of works, or to a third covenant of [anti-evangelical †] works and [evangelical] grace patched up together ? Do they not entirely and invariably point us to the covenant of grace alone ?

Hear first the word of the Lord. *He that BELIEVETH on the Son [according to the light of the dispensation he is under] hath everlasting life : He that BELIEVETH NOT, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,* John iii. 36. — When the trembling jailer cries out, *What must I do to be saved ?* Paul and Silas answer, *BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,* Acts xvi. 31. — *God so loved the world,* says St. John, *that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16. — *By GRACE,* says St. Paul, *ye are [initially] saved thro' FAITH, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not [by the covenant] of works, [nor yet by the proper merit of any works,] lest any man should boast [as the Pharisee ;*
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(14) † I add the word *anti-evangelical*, to point out the rise of the mistake of some pious protestants, who, being carried away by an injudicious zeal for the first gospel-axiom, and misled by the conciseness of the Apostle's style, get upon the pinnacle of the antinomian babel, and thence decry *all* works in general ; unhappily quoting St. Paul in confirmation of their error. Although it is evident, that the Apostle never excluded from the gospel-plan of salvation by grace, any works but the *works of unbelief*, and sometimes pleaded for the *works of faith*, and for the immense rewards, with which they shall be crowned, in far stronger terms than St. James himself ; denouncing *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon EVERY SOUL of man that neglects them, or doth evil.* Rom. ii.

all who despise the way of faith, and put the instrumental causes in the room of the first and *properly* meritorious cause of our salvation, being no better than boasting Pharisees.] For *to him that worketh* [without applying to the throne of grace, as an hell-deserving sinner] *is the reward not reckoned of* [evangelical] *grace, but of* [legal] *debt* : but *to him, that worketh not* [upon the footing of the first covenant ;] to him, who sees that he cannot [escape hell, much less] get heaven, by [setting] his good works, [if he has any, on the Redeemer's throne ;] *but believeth* [as a lost sinner,] *on him that justifieth the ungodly* ; his FAITH is counted for righteousness : he is saved by [obedient] FAITH, which is the CONDITION of the covenant of grace, Rom. iv. 4.

Thus speak the Scriptures, and, blessed be God ! thus speak also our liturgy and articles.

In the *absolution* the priest declares, that [in the day of conversion] *God pardoneth and absolveth*, that is, saveth, ☞ not those [moralists] who [being ashamed to repent, and scorning to believe the gospel, endeavour to] lead a good life to get a pardon [by their own merits :] ☞ but *all those, who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel* ; that is, all those, who, by *true repentance* renounce [together with their sins] all dependance upon the covenant of works ; and by a *faith unfeigned* fly for refuge only to [God's mercy in Christ, which is so kindly offered to sinners in] the covenant of grace. Hence it is that in the communion-service, we are commanded to pray, That, *by the merits and death of Christ, and thro' faith in his blood, we and all the whole church, may obtain remission of sins, and all other benefits of his passion.*

This holy doctrine is most clearly maintained, and strongly established in the ixth, xth, xith, xiith, and xiiiith of our articles of religion. And upon these five pillars, it will remain unshaken, as long as the church of England shall stand.

The ixth shews, that since the fall of Adam, “ *the corruption of our nature deserves God's wrath and damnation* ; ”

nation;" so that [being considered without the free gift, that came upon all men in Christ unto justification of life, Rom. v. 18.] we are, of ourselves, evil trees ready for the axe of death, and the fire of hell.

The xth adds, that we cannot consequently get grace and glory, that is, save ourselves, by bearing good fruit [thro' our original powers, according to the first covenant] because an evil tree can only produce evil fruit: — [And, that "*we have no power to do works acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us,*" according to the second covenant.]

The xith affirms, that we are saved, that is, accepted of God, changed, and made good trees, trees of the Lord's planting, *only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings*: ☞ as we can do no good works, before we are [at least] in a state of [initial] salvation, ☞ *Make the tree* [in some measure] *good*, says our Lord, *and its fruit shall* [in some degree] *be good*. [In our infancy we are freely blessed with a seed of light from Christ, *the light of men*; and at the same time, we are freely justified from the damning guilt of original corruption. As we grow up, and personally repent and *believe in the light* after a personal fall, we are again freely pardoned. Thus, so long at least as *the accepted time*, and *the day of salvation* last,] God has first [in some degree] respect to our persons in Christ, and then to our sacrifices or works [of faith.] Heb. xi. 4-Gen. iv. 4, 5.

The xiith declares, that good works, works which necessarily follow [at least the] free justification [of infants,] do not serve to *put away* [or atone for] *sin*; but to declare the truth of our faith; "*insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit.*" A tree is first planted, and then it brings forth fruit: ☞ A believer is first saved, [i. e. freely made partaker of initial salvation] and then he does good works. ☞ [A lively faith necessarily produces them, tho' a believer does not necessarily

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rily persevere in a lively faith:] If he does them not, his faith is dead; it is not [*now* a living and] saving faith; he is no [longer an obedient] believer; [but an antinomian or an apostate, a Demas or a Judas.]

The xiiith insists upon that point of doctrine, which confounds the Pharisees in all ages, and lays our virtuous pride in the dust before God: Namely, that, [when we have sinned away the justification † of infants] *& works done before* [that] *justification* [is restored,] *before faith* alone has put us [again] into a state of [initial] salvation, not only *do not fit us to receive grace*, but *have in themselves the nature of sin*, [nay of the worst of sins, spiritual pride, and pharisaic hypocrisy:] and consequently deserve death, the wages of sin, so far [are they] from meriting grace and glory. 

This is agreeable to reason as well as to scripture; for if, *of ourselves*, as says our Church, [i. e. before any degree of grace is instilled into our infant-hearts,

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(15) † Those who start at every expression they are not used to, will ask if our Church admits the justification of infants. I answer; Undoubtedly, since her clergy by her direction say over myriads of infants, “*We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy holy Spirit, to receive him for thy own child, &c.*” And in her catechism she teaches all children to say, as soon as they can speak, *I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation.* If my objector urges, that our Church puts those words only in the mouth of *baptized* children; I reply: True, because she instructs no others. But why does she admit to baptism *all* the children that are born within her pale? Does she not vindicate her practice in this respect, by an appeal to our Lord’s kind command: “*Let little children come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?*” This I had not considered, when I said in my *Appeal*, p. 186, that our Church returns thanks for the regeneration of baptized infants *only* [I should have said *chiefly*] upon a charitable supposition, &c. For it is evident that she does it also upon Christ’s gracious declaration, Mark x. 13, &c. the precious gospel of her office, upon which she comments in a manner most favourable to children; concluding her charge on the occasion by these words; *Wherefore, we being thus persuaded of the GOOD WILL of our heavenly Father towards this* [unbaptized] *infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting, &c.* These words I had not attended to, when I wrote my *Appeal*. I take this first opportunity of acknowledging my mistake, which shall be rectified in the next edition.

or before God freely visits us again when we have personally fallen away from him,] *we cannot by our good works [so called] prepare ourselves to faith : If we are such crab trees, as can bring forth no apples, [without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will, it is plain that] by producing as many crabs, [i. e. as many works of unbelief] as [blaspheming] Paul before his conversion ; and of as fine a colour, and as large a size, as those which the self-righteous Pharisee bore ; we cannot change our own nature, nor force from ourselves the sweet fruit of one [truly] good work : ' Many who have not the ' true faith,' says our Church, yet flourish in works of mercy. But they that shine in good works [so called] without faith, are like dead men, who have goodly and precious tombs : Or, to carry on the allegory of our Reformers, the fine crabs which such people produce, please the eye of the spectator, who thinks them good apples ; but God, who sees their hearts, tastes in the deceitful fruit nothing but the sourness of a crab. Such crabs are the alms of whoremongers, the prayers of unjust persons, the public worship of swearers and drunkards, the tithes and fasts † of Pharisees. Isa. i. 11, &c.*

✎ Having thus shewn you, how self-righteous, unawakened sinners dream of salvation, either by the covenant of works, or by a third imaginary covenant, in which two incompatible things [pharisaical] works and [evangelical] grace, [antichristian] merits and mercy [in Christ] are jumbled together ; and having proved by plain, unanswerable passages, and by the 39 articles, that the gospel and our Church shew us, salvation cannot be attained, but under the second covenant, that is, *by [obedient] faith only*, and not by

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(16) † Here is a short enumeration of the good works, so called, which I decry in this sermon. Had my opponent considered it, he would never have supposed, that my discourse is "the best refutation" of what I have advanced in the Checks, in favour of the good works maintained by St. James and Mr. Wesley.

[the covenant of] works ; I beg leave to recapitulate the whole in three articles, which contain the sum of the gospel, and of the doctrine that I have constantly preached among you, and am determined to preach, God being my helper, till my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, † [unless a flaw can be found] in any of them, by the word of God or the articles of our Church. ☞

Upon the proofs before advanced, I solemnly declare and publicly affirm : (1.) That there is no salvation to be attained by [the covenant of] works since the fall. The best man having broken an hundred times the first covenant, deserves an hundred times damnation by his works, and can no more be saved from hell by his obedience to God's law [of innocence] than a thief can be saved from the gallows, by the civil law which condemns him to be hanged.

(2.) [Respecting the primary and properly meritorious cause of our salvation, from first to last] *we are saved*, as it is written in our eleventh article, *only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our works or deservings* : And, that [in the day of conversion] *we are justified by faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort : Yea the only doctrine that can melt down the heart of sinners, and make them constantly zealous of all sorts of good works, [if it is not made to supersede the justification of believers by the evidence of works, both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment : A doctrine this, which few antinomians are daring enough directly to oppose.]

(3.) As

(17) † The words enclosed in brackets are in my manuscript, and were written several years ago, when, looking over my sermon, I thought they savoured more of christian modesty than those, which Mr. Hill has in his copy : [*And here I give a public challenge to any man living to find a flaw*] I challenge no body now, but I promise, that if any man living will be kind enough, to shew me my errors by plain scripture, and solid argument, he shall have my sincere thanks. For if I know my heart, pure and unmixed truth is the object of my desires, and controversial pursuits.

(3.) As all mankind are condemned by the covenant of works, *he that believeth not* [in the light of his dispensation] *being condemned already* : and as by the covenant of grace, there is no salvation to be had but in Christ thro' faith : so there is no mixing those two covenants without renouncing Christ and his gospel. He that stands with one foot upon the covenant of works, and with the other foot upon the covenant of grace ; [he that talks of divine mercy, while his heart continues as regardless of it as if he were sinless ; he that ends his prayers by the name of Christ, while he remains unconcerned about his fallen state,] is in the most eminent danger of eternal ruin. He that says, " I will do first what I can to merit heaven, " I will do my best ; and Christ, I hope, will do the rest ; and God, I trust, will have mercy upon me," is yet without [a known] God, and without [an applied] Christ in the world : he knows neither the nature of God's law, nor that of Christ's gospel.

[This is, my dear hearers, the substance of the *three articles*, which, eleven years ago I publicly laid down in this Church, as the ground of the doctrine which I had preached, and was determined still to preach among you. And I solemnly declare, that, to this day, I have not seen the least cause to *reject* any one of them as erroneous : Tho' I must confess, that I have found abundant reason particularly to *guard* the second, against the daring attacks, that antinomians in principle, or in practice, make upon St. James's undefiled religion. To return :]

We are undoubtedly obliged to do what we can, and to use the means of grace at all [proper] times and in all [convenient] places ; but, to rest in those means [like the Pharisees ;] to suppose that they will save us ; and, upon this supposition, to be easy without the experience of [converting] grace in our hearts, is very absurd. It is a mistake as foolish as that of the man, who supposes that his garden will be the more fruitful for pipes, which convey no water ; or that his body can be refreshed by empty cups.

The language of a penitent sinner is, " Lord, " I pray, and hear [thy word ;] I fast, and receive " [the commemorative tokens of thy passion ;] I give " alms, and keep the sabbath ; but after all, *I am an* " *unprofitable servant*. — [I must *work out my own* " *salvation with fear and trembling*, and yet] *without* " *thee I can do nothing* ; I cannot change my heart ; " I cannot root up from my breast the desire of praise, " the thirst of pleasure, and the hankering after gold, " vanity, beauty, or sensual gratifications which I " continually feel : — [Without thee] I cannot force " my stubborn heart to repent, believe, and love ; to " be meek and lowly, calm and devout. Lord deli- " ver me from this body of death ; *Lord, save or I* " *perish*."

Christ will have all the glory [worthy of him] or none. We must be † wholly saved by him, or lost for ever : [for altho' we must be *co-workers with him*, by walking religiously in good works ; and if we are not, we shall have our portion with the *workers of iniquity* ; yet it is *he* that *worketh in us*, as in moral agents, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. It is he that appoints, and blesses all the inferior means of our salvation, therefore all the glory properly and originally belongs to him alone.]

[All our pardons flow down to us, in the streams of his precious blood. All our life, light, and power, are nothing but emanations from him, who is *the fountain of life, the sun of righteousness, the wisdom and power of God*, and in a word, *Jehovah our righteousness*. All that *gracious rewardableness* of the works of faith, all that *aptitude* of our sprinkled obedience unto eternal life, all that *being worthy*, which he himself condescends to speak of, Rev. iii. 4, and Luke xx. 35, spring not only *from his gracious appointment*, but from his overflowing merits. A comparison will illustrate my meaning.]

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(18) † See the first note upon the word *merely*. — N. B. Here begins the greatest addition to my old sermon. It is in favour of *free grace*, and runs thro' fourteen paragraphs.

[You see the chearful light that flows in upon us thro' those windows, and renders the glass as bright as this spring day. You know, that this brightness *in the glass* is not *from* the glass, which was totally dark some hours ago ; a fit emblem *THEN* of *the works of darkness*, the works of unbelief : such works being as much devoid of rewardableness, as those panes were of light at midnight. Let us not forget then, that if our works are graciously rewarded, it is only when they are the works of *faith*, whose peculiar property it is *freely* to admit the merits of Christ, and the beams of the *sun of righteousness* ; just as it is the property of the transparent matter, which composes these windows, *necessarily* to admit the genial warmth and chearful rays of the natural sun.]

[If I admire a poor widow, gladly casting her last mite into the treasury ; or a martyr, generously giving his body to blood-thirsty executioners ; it is only because their lively faith receives, and their pure charity reflects the light of him, who, for our sake, became poor ; and for our sake joyfully surrendered to his bloody murderers. But altho' this image of our Lord's meritorious holiness and sufferings, does great honour to the saints who reflect it ; yet, the praise of it originally and properly belongs to him alone.]

[An illustration will make you sensible of it. You have seen a glass perfectly reflecting the beauty of a person placed over against it, you have admired the elegant proportion of features, which composed her beauty : but did you ever see any man so void of good sense, as to suppose, that the beauty was *originally* in the glass which reflected it ; or that the lovely appearance existed without depending on its original ; or that it robbed the living beauty of her peculiar glory ? And shall any, on the one hand, be so full of voluntary humility, as to maintain, that Christ is dishonoured by the *derived worthiness* of the works of *faith*, whose office it is to receive, embrace, and trust in the Redeemer's *original* and *proper* merit ? Shall any, on the other hand, be so full of pharisaic pride

pride as to fancy, that the distinguishing excellence of our good works, if we have any, springs from, or terminates in ourselves? No, my brethren: As rivers flow back to the sea, and lose themselves in that immense reservoir of waters, whence they had their origin; so let all the "rewardable condescency" † of our evangelical obedience flow back to, and lose itself in the boundless, and bottomless ocean of our Lord's *original and proper merits.*]

[He, He alone is worthy—*properly* worthy! Worthy, —supremely *worthy is the Lamb that was slain!* Let us then always say, with the humble men of old, *Our goods are nothing unto thee*, our good works cannot possibly benefit thee. *What have we*, great God, *that we have not received* from thy gracious hand? And shall we keep back part of thy incontestable property, and impiously wear thy robes of praise! Far be the spiritual sacrilege from every pious breast! As *thine is all the kingdom and power*; so *thine be all the glory for ever and ever!*]

[If therefore, my brethren, we have the honour of *filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church*; — *If we are even offered upon the sacrifice of each other's faith*; let us dread as blasphemy the wild thought of completing, and perfecting our Lord's infinitely complete, and perfect atonement. As God, who is infinite in himself, was not made greater by the immense bulk of created worlds; nor brighter by the shining perfections of countless myriads of angels and suns: So the infinite value of that *one offering, by which Christ has for ever perfected* in atoning merits *them that are sanctified*, is not augmented by the works of all the saints, and the blood of all the martyrs.
And

(19) † I need not inform my judicious readers, that I use the uncouth, barbarian expression of Dr. Owen, "rewardable condescency," to convey the meaning of our Lord, when he graciously speaks of *our meriting or being worthy*. If sick persons will not take a draught but out of a certain cup, made in the height of a queer fashion, we must please them for their good.

And as the heat of the fire adds nothing to the nature of the fire, or the beams of the sun to the sun : so the righteousness of the saints does not encrease that of Christ, nor adds their holiness any thing to his personal excellence.]

[Keep we then at an awful distance from the gulph, which self-righteous Pharisees set between themselves, and the justifier of those, who, like the contrite publican, are sensible of their ungodliness. With indignation rise we against the delusion of the Romanists, who countenance the absurd and impious doctrine of *indulgences*, by the worse than pharisaic doctrine of their *works of supererogation*. Let us not only receive, and defend in a scriptural manner, the important articles of our Church, which I have already mentioned ; but with undaunted courage before men, and with penitential contrition before God, let us stand to our xivth article, which teaches us, after our Lord, to say before the throne of inflexible justice, resurgent holiness, and dazzling glory, *We are unprofitable servants, even when we have done all that is commanded us*. In point of *strict equivalence* our best works of faith, our holiest duties, cannot *properly* merit the least heavenly reward. But, O ! may the humbling truth keep us for ever in the dust ! in point of *strict justice* our every bad work *properly* deserves infernal torments.]

[Therefore, while we earnestly contend for practical, pure, undefiled religion, take we the greatest care, not to obscure the *genuine* doctrines of grace. With meekness let us maintain unto blood, the honour of our Saviour's merits, against the hypocritical sons of virtuous pride, who cast the destructive veil of unbelief over the invaluable sacrifice of his body. And in our little sphere, let every one of us testify with the beloved disciple, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, in whom he is well pleased with us ; and for whose sake he works in us to repent, believe, and obey ; when we yield to the drawings of his grace, and concur with his spirit in the work of our salvation.*]

[Thro'

[Thro' that dear Redeemer then, we receive all the favours, which the Father of mercies bestows upon us. Are our hearts softened ? It is thro' the influence of his preventing grace. Are our sins blotted out ? It is through the sprinkling of his atoning blood. Are our souls renewed ? It is by the communication of his powerful righteousness. Are we numbered among God's adopted children, and made partakers of his loving spirit ? It is thro' a faith that receives him as the *light of the world*, and the *life of men*.

[The very graces, which the Spirit works in us ; and the fruits of holiness, which those graces produce in our hearts and lives ; are accepted only for Christ's sake. It is he, who presents them to God, sprinkled with his precious blood, and perfumed with his meritorious intercession. Nor are the defects of our holiest things, any other way atoned for, than by the full perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, which he made upon the cross for the sins of the whole world.]

[For Christ's sake God has annexed certain rewards of grace and glory, to the works of faith which Christ's spirit excites us to ; and, I repeat it, for the sake of Christ only, we receive the rewards promised to humble, evangelical, sprinkled obedience. All christian believers say, *Not we, but the grace of God in Christ* : So far as their tempers and actions have been good, they cry out, *Thou hast wrought all our works in us*. They all shout, *Christ FOR us*, and *Christ IN us*, the *hope of glory*. They all ascribe *salvation to the Lamb* ; and while they *cast their crowns of righteousness* and glory at his feet, they join in the grand chorus of the Church : *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever*. Thus all is Christ ; nothing without, nothing besides him. In a word, he is to believers, as the Apostle justly calls him, **ALL IN ALL**.]

[Indeed in maintaining the doctrine of *free grace*, I cannot but go even farther than our mistaken brethren,

thren, who suppose themselves the only advocates for it. They must forgive me, if I cannot be of their sentiment, when they insinuate, that they shall *absolutely* and *necessarily* be saved. For as reason dictates, that *absolute necessity* vanishes before *free grace*; so Christ charges his dearest elect to *fear God* as a righteous judge, who *CAN cast body and soul into hell*; yea, who can do it *justly*. No gracious promise therefore is made them, whose fulfilment, in heaven as well as upon earth, is not all of *grace* as well as of *truth*, and all thro' the merits of Christ.]

[O ye *precious merits* of my Saviour, and thou *free grace* of my God! I, for one, shall want you, as long as the sun or moon endureth. Nay, when those luminaries shall cease to shine, I shall wrap myself in you; my transported soul shall grasp you; my insatiate spirit shall plunge into your unfathomable depths; and while I shall run the never-ending circle of my blessed existence, my overflowing bliss shall spring from you; my grateful heart shall leap thro' your impulse, my exulting tongue shall shout your praise, and I shall strike my golden harp to your eternal honour.]

[Nay, this very day, I publicly set my seal again to the important truths contained in the following scriptures:] *There is no other name* [no other deserving person] *under heaven, given to men whereby we may* [PROPERLY] *be saved* in whole or in part, but only the name [or person] of JESUS CHRIST. *He trod the winepress of God's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him. He alone is a Saviour, and there is none besides him.* [If he that converts a sinner, is said to *save a soul from death*, it is because he has the honor of being the Saviour's agent, and not because he is the "ORIGINAL CAUSE" of any man's salvation.]

☞ Wo then to those, who teach sinners the double way, the pharisaic way, the † [self-righteous] way of salvation,

(20) † Eleven years ago I said *the popish way*: I drop the expression now as favouring of protestant-bigotry. Tho' the papists lean in general to that extreme, yet many of them have known and taught the way of salvation by a faith that interests us in the Redeemer's merits;

salvation, partly by man's [antichristian] merits [according to the first covenant,] and partly by the [proper] merits of Jesus Christ [according to the second.] *If we, or an angel from heaven, says St. Paul, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached, namely, that we are saved [i. e. pardoned, absolved, and sanctified] by grace, thro' faith [which worketh by love] and that not of ourselves, [not without an atoning priest and the Spirit helping our infirmities] not [by the covenant] of works : it is the [gospel-]gift of God—let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8.]* ☞

☞ He really denies his Saviour, and tears the seamless robe of Christ's righteousness, who patches it with the rags of his own [anti-evangelical, faithless] righteousness, [Or, to speak without metaphor, he denies our Lord's meritorious fulfilling of the law of innocence, he despises the Saviour's complete observance of the Adamic law of works, who being forgetful of his aggravated guilt, and regardless of his palpable impotence, refuses to submit to the law of faith, and to embrace the covenant of grace with an ardor becoming a poor, self-condemned, lost, and undone sinner. Nay, I go farther still :] he takes away [or obstructs] all the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, who pretends to mend it by adding thereto the filthy drops of his own [anti-evangelical, pharisaic] goodness, [in order to make a more complete satisfaction to divine justice.] ☞

It is mere blasphemy against divine mercy, says our Church, and great derogation to the blood-shedding of our Saviour, to suppose that our works can DESERVE, or PURCHASE to us remission of sins, and consequently salvation. No : it is bestowed on BELIEVERS of the free grace and mercy of God, by the mediation of the blood of his

merits ; many have discovered and attacked self-righteousness in its most deceitful appearances. Many have lived and died in the most profound humility. I would no more be a bitter protestant, damning all the papists in a lump ; than a bitter papist, anathematizing all protestants without exception.

his son Jesus Christ, without merit or deserving on their part, [altho' not without the evangelical worthiness, which their faith derives from that dear Redeemer.] Hom. on Fasting.

To conclude : By the covenant of works man has all the glory of his own salvation. Faith [in a Redeemer] is made of no effect ; Christ is entirely set aside, and works are placed in the Mediator's throne. — According to the imaginary, mixt covenant of salvation by our own good works [so called, or to speak with propriety, by our own faithless, hypocritical works] mended, [as we think,] with [some unscriptural notions and expressions about] Christ's merits ; man has the FIRST share of the glory ; Christ has only man's leavings ; [the Redeemer is allowed to be the *last* but not the *first* ; the *omega* but not the *alpha* : The two covenants are confounded ;] works and faith [or rather, faithless works and faith, graceless works and grace] contrary to my text, and indeed to common sense, come in together for a part of the honour [as if they were the primary meritorious cause of our salvation : whereas the good works of faith themselves are at best only the secondary, evidencing cause of our final salvation. †]

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(21) † Should a prejudiced Reader charge me with having mixed the two covenants in my Checks in opposition to the doctrine of this discourse ; Should he say, that I have taught the double way of works and faith i. e. of *faithless works* and *faith*, I protest against the groundless assertion, and appeal to all my candid Readers, whether I have not constantly pointed out the one gospel-way to heaven, the good old way of FAITH, *which WORKETH by love*. An unfeigned faith in Christ, according to the light of our dispensation, a faith shewn by evangelical works, is the scriptural condition of the covenant of grace, which I have all along insisted upon : whereas anti-evangelical works, helped out by a feigned faith, are the imaginary condition of the mixt, fantastic covenant, against which I so justly bore my testimony eleven years ago, and against which I bear it now, fully designing so to do, " God being my helper, till my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

As some persons thro' the force of prejudice, and others thro' some natural defect in their understanding, cannot see any difference between *the way of faith working by obedient love*, which I point out in the Checks ;

But by the gospel all is set in a most beautiful order, and exquisite harmony. The merits and sufferings of Christ, the Redeemer of the world, are the only *meritorious*, [or as says our Church, "*original*"] *cause*" of our salvation. The glory is entirely ascribed to him; and he alone sits upon the throne as a Saviour; while proud man has his mouth stopped, or opens it only in the dust to extol redeeming love. Faith, whose office it is continually to borrow the merits

Checks; and *the way of works helped out by feigned faith*, which I decry in this discourse; I shall, by a plain illustration, endeavour to show them the amazing difference. A good king pities two condemned malefactors just turned off; and, at the prince's request, not only gets them cut down from the gallows, but after restoring them by proper assistance to a degree of strength, he sets them up in a genteel business, which they are to carry on under the constant direction of the prince. One of them, who is a *publican*, deeply conscious of his crimes, and wondering at the prince's condescension, does with docility and diligence whatsoever he is commanded, frequently complaining that he does so little, and expressing the greatest thankfulness, not only for his life, but for the health, light, tools, and skill he works with. The other, who is a *pharisee*, forgets that he has been reprieved from the gallows. He is full of self-importance and ingratitude: he wonders at the publican for making so much ado about the king's mercy and the prince's favour. He perty tells you that he does his duty; and that, if he has been guilty of some faults, he thanks God, they were not of a capital nature. He perpetually boasts of his diligence, and though he does nothing, or only spoils his work by doing it entirely against the prince's directions, he says, that he is determined to maintain himself by his own industry; and that, if he does not find it possible to get his living without help, he will condescend to accept some assistance from the prince to make both ends meet; but it shall be as little as he can help, for he does not love to be under an obligation to any body, no not to the king himself.—Now, who does not see, that, while the king graciously rewards the humble diligence of the *penitent publican*, he may justly punish the *proud pharisee* for his wretched, hypocritical obedience? and that, when Mr. Wesley and I have sometimes contended for the works of the publican, and sometimes decried those of the pharisee, we have only done the work of evangelists, and declared with the prophets and apostles of old, that *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*: and that *he will give grace and glory, and no good thing shall be withhold from them that live a godly life*? If this is an error, I ask, Wherein does it differ from that frequent and awful declaration of our Lord, *Whoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted*?

rits of Christ, and to receive the quickening power of his spirit : ☞ Faith, I say, is the only instrumental cause of our free salvation [in the day of conversion.] It receives Christ and salvation, as the hand of a beggar receives an alms. ☞ And as for good works [properly so called], so far are they from being left out of the gospel-plan, that they have a MOST EMINENT place in it : ☞ They are the DECLARATIVE CAUSE † of our free justification [both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment :] A constant, uniform course of all sorts of good works, with an holy and heavenly-minded conversation, being the only evidence of a lively and saving faith, [when it has time to show itself by external works.]

Thus, [to sum up all in one sentence,] Christ alone [properly] *merits*, faith alone [properly] *apprehends*, and good works alone [properly] *evidence* salvation : Yea they are the fruit of salvation [begun ;] ☞ for [all works *meet for repentance* spring from the free justification and initial salvation, in which we are put in our infancy ; and] *the love of God shed abroad in an* [established] *believer's heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him*, is salvation itself ; this love being the tree on which all [the external] good works [of perfect christians] grow, and making our gracious heaven below, as it will make our glorious heaven above.

(22) † The word *Cause*, left out by my opponent in his quotation of this part of my old sermon, evidently shows, that even formerly I did not so far lean to antimomianism, as not to assert the *absolute* necessity of good works, in order to the eternal salvation of adults. For, if works are the secondary *cause* of our final justification, they can no more be dispensed with in the great day, than *faith* in the day of conversion, an *effect* necessarily supposing its *cause*. If therefore I call the justification of adults *free*, it is not to exclude *faith* and *works*, its instrumental causes in the day of conversion and judgment ; but to intimate, that all along we are *primarily* justified by Christ's merits, and that we *never* have one single grain of *original* worthiness.

THIRD PART.

[Since I give good works, as I have just observed, a *most eminent place* in the gospel-plan, even the place of the *evidences* that will, under Christ, *cause* our eternal salvation] I [may well] proceed to show the injustice or unreasonableness of those, who accuse me to preach against good works. For, "*he exclaims against good works — he runs down good works,*" is an objection [which is still at times] urged against my ministry.

[Altho' I confess with sorrow, that some years ago, when I had more zeal than prudence, I dropped among you some unguarded expressions, and did not always clearly distinguish between the "good works," so called, of unhumiliated pharisees; and the genuine obedience of penitent believers; yet I should wrong the truth, and undervalue my character as your minister, if I did not observe, that, as professed antiquarians have always loathed the doctrine of a *believer's* justification *by works*; so the pharisaical world has always abhorred the doctrine of a *sinners*' justification *by faith*. Hence it is that] the above-mentioned aspersion, with abundance of cruel mockings, and pitiful false reports, have been in all ages the lot of all those, who have [steadily] preached the gospel of Christ, that is, the glad news of free salvation thro' [obedient] faith in his blood.

We preach Christ crucified, says St. Paul, *to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that believe, Christ the power and wisdom of God,* 1. Cor. i. 23. It is plain from this, and several other passages in the epistles, that the primitive christians suffered much reproach on this account. St. Peter exhorts them thus: *Have your conversation honest among the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may at last glorify God by your good works; for it is his will, that with wel. doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and make them ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.* 1. Peter, ii. 12, 15. St.

St. Paul had the same objection continually cast in his face. † *Do we then make void the law thro' faith?* says he in his own defence, Rom. iii. 31: That is, by preaching salvation *thro' faith* do we hinder people from doing the good works commanded in the law? *God forbid! yea we establish the law:* i. e. Our preaching is so far from superseding good works, that it [inforces them by the greatest variety of motives, and] puts our hearers into [the *best*, not to say] the *only* method of doing them: for it shews them how, being *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, and having their *heart purified by faith*, they shall naturally [i. e. spontaneously] produce all sorts of good works, instead of bringing forth a few counterfeit ones.

The apostle answers the same objection, Rom. vi. 1. *shall we then, who are saved by grace thro' faith, continue in sin that grace may abound?* Shall we omit doing good works; shall we do evil works, because salvation is not [by the covenant] of works, but [by that] of grace? *God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein!* As if he had said, Is not the faith which we preach, a *faith of the operation of God*? Is it not a powerful and active principle,

G 3

that

(23) † The antinomians by *fair speeches* undesignedly deceive the hearts of the simple, Because St. Paul fully answers this objection, they make the injudicious believe, that he was of their sentiment; tho', upon their plan of doctrine, the objection which he starts is absolutely unanswerable. They say, "*We establish the law* by preaching Christ, who has kept it for us; and by extolling his imputed righteousness, thro' which we are for ever compleat in justifying obedience before God." Now, altho' we humbly and thankfully acknowledge with them, that our Lord has kept the Adamic law of innocence, and made it honourable for us; yet we absolutely deny, that he has kept the evangelical *law of liberty* for us. Personal obedience to it is indispensably required of every man, and if a believer does not fulfil it for himself, St. Paul and St. James inform us, that a *severer punishment*, and a more *merciless judgment* await his disobedience, than if he had never believed, Heb. x. 29. James ii. 13. Thus those holy apostles fully make up the gap of antinomian free grace, which some of our gospel ministers make it their business to widen.

turns † the heart from all sin to all righteousness ? Is it not a faith, by which we are made new creatures, and *overcome the world* ? 1 John, v. 1, 4.

[When people *lie in darkness*, doing *the works of darkness*, which in the dark pass either for good works that divine justice will reward, or for trifling offences that divine mercy will overlook ; then heart-felt repentance is totally neglected, and deep mourning for sin passes for *despair*. Few know what it is to *look on him whom they have pierced and mourn*. Very few, if any, can experimentally say : *Being justified by faith we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*.]

[Suppose the lot of a minister acquainted with the privileges of the christian dispensation, is cast in a place, where these pharisaic and common delusions generally prevail ; the first thing he has to do, is undoubtedly to uncover and shake the false foundations, on which his unawakened hearers build their hope. He must show them, that their partial, external, faithless obedience will never profit them. He must decry their imaginary good works, •tear their filthy rags of fancied righteousness, sweep away their *refuges of lies*, and scourge their consciences with the curse of the law, 'till they see their nakedness, feel their guilt, and *receive the sentence of death in themselves*. Then, and not till then, will they stand on a level with the poor contrite publican, and

Groan the sinner's only plea,

“ God be merciful to me.” !]

[When a preacher is engaged in that important and thankless business, how natural is it for him, especially if he is yet young and unexperienced, or if
he

(24) † How could I have had the assurance of asking these questions, if I had believed as my late Opponent, that a man, who actually commits the greatest crimes, may actually have as true, justifying faith as Abraham ever had ! I should expect, that, if such a faith did not as I said eleven years ago, *turn the heart from all sin to all righteousness*, it would at least turn it from deliberate adultery, murder, and incest.

he is heated by the opposition of obstinate pharisees, and bigoted papists, to drop some unguarded expressions against good works; or at least not to make always a proper distinction between the pharisaical works of unbelief, which Isaiah calls *filthy rags*, and the works of faith which our Lord calls *good and ornamental works*.? And how glad are his adversaries, to have such a plausible pretence for throwing an odium upon him, by affirming that he explodes *all* sorts of works, even those for which our *reward will be great in heaven!*]

☞ The Devil fought against our Reformers with such weapons. All the books that the Papists wrote against them, rang with the charge of their turning good works out of christianity. ☞ Hear good Bishop Laumer, one of the best livers that ever were: *You will say now, "Here is all faith, faith; but we hear nothing of good works:" for some carnal people make such carnal objections like themselves, &c.* Sermon on twelfth day.

Of the same import is the following passage out of the Homily on Fasting: "*Thus much is said of good works, &c. to take away, so much as may be, from envious minds, and slanderous tongues, all just occasion of slanderous speaking, as tho' good works were rejected.*"

Thus St. Peter, St. Paul, and our Reformers were accused of despising good works, because they exalted Christ, [and with an holy indignation trampled upon the works of unbelief, which are the foundation of all pharisaic hopes:] And [so far as I have not, by unguarded expressions, given a *just* cause of offence to those, who are glad of any occasion to decry the fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith;] I own that I rejoice to be counted worthy of suffering the same reproach, with such a cloud of faithful witnesses. Nevertheless as the scriptures say, that we must *not let the good that is in us be evil spoken of*, I shall advance some arguments, which, by God's blessing, will either convince or shame my accusers.

You

You say, [and this I speak particularly to you, that are fully set against the doctrine of *salvation by faith* :] you say “ that I preach against good works — that I run down good works, &c:” but pray, do you know what good works are? I am afraid you do not, or else you would † [not accuse me so rashly :] Give me leave therefore to instruct you once in this point.

All divines agree, that good works are of three sorts : (1) Works of *piety* towards God ; (2) Works of *charity* towards our neighbour ; and (3) Works of *self-denial* towards ourselves.

[To say nothing now of the good works of the *heart*, such as good thoughts, good tempers, and internal acts of repentance, faith, hope, and love ;] in the first class [of *external* good works,] which includes *works of piety*, divines rank public prayer in the church, family-prayer in private houses, and [meditation or] private prayer in one’s closet: Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs: Reading the bible and other good books: Hearing the word preached or expounded : Receiving the sacraments : Keeping the sabbath day and festivals holy : Confessing Christ before a wicked world : And suffering the loss of one’s estate, of one’s good name, or life itself, for the gospel’s sake.

Now I appeal to every impartial hearer, yea and to thy own conscience, O man, who accusest me of preaching against good works, whether I ever taught directly or indirectly, that we ought not constantly to attend public worship in the house of God, as well as private worship in our own houses, and to perform secret worship in our closets :—Whether I ever spoke against singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs ; or against reading the bible and other good books :—
Whether

(25) † Instead of these words [not accuse me so rashly] I formerly wrote [be ashamed to accuse me so falsely.] I reject them now, because a minister of the gospel should not only speak the truth, but endeavour to speak it in the most acceptable manner. It is enough to give offence when it cannot be avoided. We should not provoke the displeasure of our hearers *without necessity*.

Whether I ever so much as hinted, that we ought not to endeavour so to dispatch our worldly business, as to hear [if possible] the word preached or expounded both on sundays and working days — Whether I ever *intimated*, † that we can live in the neglect of God's ordinances; and break his sabbaths, without bringing upon ourselves *SWIFT DESTRUCTION* : — And lastly, whether at any time I cryed down suffering reproach for Christ, and parting with all things, even life itself, to follow him and his doctrine.

Nay, do not you know in your own breast, that my insisting upon these *good works*, and encouraging all I can to do them, is what makes me to be despised and rejected by many, and perhaps by yourself? How can you then, without wounding? † [your own conscience] accuse me of preaching against good works? Are you not rather the person that speaks against them? Are you not *yourself* one of those [loose moralists] who say, that, “ For their part they see no need of so many sermons, lectures, and sacraments in the church : no need of so much singing, reading, praying, and godly conversation in private houses : no need of such strictness in keeping the sabbath-day holy, &c : ”

If you are one of them, you add [I fear] detraction to infidelity, and bearing false testimony to open prophaneness [or Laodicean lukewarmness.] You decry *good works* yourself by your words, your practice, and your example; and when you have done, you lay the sin at my door; you say that I preach against them!

O

(26) † My opponent has not only done this, but he has *intimated* that all believers may commit adultery, murder, and incest, not only *without bringing upon themselves swift destruction*, but with this additional advantage, that they shall infallibly “ sing louder ” in heaven for their deepest falls, which can never finally hurt them, because all their sins are unconditionally for ever and for ever forgiven. Had I ever insinuated such loose principles among my parishioners, I should have had a brazen forehead indeed, to look them in the face, while I made the above-mentioned appeal.

(27) † Eleven years ago I said [*common sense and common honesty.*] I now discard the expression as *needlessly* offensive.

O how will you reconcile this conduct, I shall not say to christianity, but to good manners, good sense, or even to heathen honesty !

In the *second* class of good works, divines place works of [justice and] charity ; and these are of two sorts, such as are done to the *bodies*, and such as are done to the *souls* of men. The former are [for the most part] enumerated by our Lord, Mat. xxv. They consist [in being true and just in all our dealings ; in *providing things honest in the sight of all men*, for us and ours ; in paying our just debts as soon as possible, in protecting widows and fatherless children,] in giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty ; in entertaining strangers, easing the oppressed, clothing the naked, attending the sick, visiting the prisoners, [and burying the dead, from scriptural and not from pharisaical motives.]

Now will any one, who scruples † [advancing an untruth,] dare affirm, that I ever spoke a word against doing any one of these good works ?—Against doing them [*at improper times, from bad motives,*] in a *wrong manner*, and to *wrong ends*, I have often spoken ; and so have all the preachers, who do not *daub the wall with untempered mortar* : Christ first, Mat. vi. 2. St. Paul next, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. and our Church after them ; see the Homily on Fasting. But I ask it again, whoever heard me speak one word *against doing them* ? On the contrary, have I not declared again and again, that even *a cup of cold water, given in Christ's name, should in no wise lose its reward*—should certainly be rewarded in eternal life, [if †] not *with* eternal-life ; [And do not some of
you

(28) † Eleven years ago I said [*forging a lie.*]

(29) † Formerly I wrote [*alibo* not *with* eternal life.] The expression was perhaps too peremptory. A man may be so circumstanced in the sultry deserts of Arabia, that *a cup of cold water* may be of more *real* value to him than a diadem, and of equal worth with *his own life*. Now if he lovingly gives that cup to a disciple of Jesus, or even to his heathen enemy, for his Redeemer's or Creator's sake ; I
dare

you know, that within these two Years, I have lost many of my religious friends, by making a stand for the evangelical *worthiness* of the works of faith ?]

As for works of mercy done to the *souls* of men, such as [giving a christian education to our children and apprentices,] comforting the afflicted, encouraging the dejected, strengthening the weak, exhorting the careless, succouring the tempted, instructing the ignorant, [sympathizing with mourners] warning the stubborn, [detecting hypocrisy] reproving sin, stopping immorality, rebuking profaneness, and helping each other in the narrow way ; it is known to many, that my name is cast out as evil by sabbath-breakers, swearers, and drunkards, for endeavouring to walk in these good works myself, and to make others walk in them.

And yet *you*, [I still address myself to the inveterate enemies of salvation by faith,] *you*, who possibly ridicule all those good works, and dream of being saved without them ; *you*, who do perhaps just the reverse of them, strengthening one another's hands in licentiousness and profaneness, in sabbath-breaking, swearing, or scoffing at every thing that looks like seriousness ; *you* accuse me of despising or discountenancing good works !—O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon, lest the very Philistines laugh at the glaring inconsistency of your words and conduct.

Good

dare not say, that such a work of faith, such an act of brotherly love, may not be rewarded *with* eternal life. Jesus Christ and Dr. Owen make me rather think to the contrary : For the former says, *Who-so-ever shall lose*, or shall venture to *lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's*, [which, if I mistake not, implies, among other particulars, hazarding our life for steadily adhering to the gospel-precept, that enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to give drink to a thirsty enemy :] *shall save it*.—*Verily I say unto you, There is no man that has left house, &c. or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now — and in the world to come ETERNAL LIFE*. — As for the champion of the Calvinists, he is at once so orthodox and so honest as to confess, that thro' God's gracious appointment, the whole [and consequently every genuine part] of our obedience, has a REWARDABLE conduency unto ETERNAL LIFE. But more of this in the following Essay.

Good works of the *third* class, relate to keeping under the flesh, and all its sinful appetites. The chief of these works, are a moderate use of meat, drink, and sleep; self-denial, [in apparel, furniture, and equipage;] chastity [in all its branches; subduing our slothful, rebellious flesh by] early rising, abstinence, fasting; [and, in a word, by *taking up our daily cross, and following our abstemious, and yet laborious Lord.*]

[Permit me to do as St. Paul—to *speak as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting.*] Have I not enforced the necessity of *these* good works both *publicly and from house to house*? Have you not sometimes even gone away from this place of worship, secretly displeased at my insisting so much upon them; complaining perhaps, “that I went too far, or that no body could live up to what I preach;” and making a hundred such remarks, instead of meditating upon these words of our Lord: *With man indeed it is impossible, but with God all things are possible?* And yet you now complain that I do not preach up good works — Pray, my brethren, be consistent; keep to one point, and do not say and unsay: I can no more be too strict, and yet make too little of good works; than I can go east and west at the same time. Only think . . . and you will perceive that your very complaints justify me, that your sayings overturn one another, and that *your own mouths prove you perverse.*

You will probably say, Have we not heard you affirm more than once, that no body can be saved by his works: yea, that a man may go as constantly to church, as the † pharisee did to the temple, be as virtuous as he was, pay tithes as exactly as he did, and be *damned* after all? Can you deny my having preached this doctrine twenty times?”

Deny it! — By no means. It is a doctrine for which, God being my helper, I am ready to go to the stake.

(30) † From this objection it is evident, that the works which I decry'd eleven years ago, were those against which I now bear my testimony, namely *pharisaical* works.

stake. It is the very doctrine, that I have established in the former part of this discourse : How then can I deny it ?

Here methinks a † pharisee replies in triumph : “ Well then, you plead guilty to the charge : you confess that you have preached twenty times against good works.”

† [I deny the conclusion.] Have you not understanding [or attention] enough to see, there is a vast difference between preaching & against the [proper] merit of good works, and preaching against good works themselves ? Between saying, that obedience to the king will never get us the crown of Great Britain, and affirming that we owe the king no obedience ? In a word, between saying that good works will never procure us heaven, [as the *primary* and strictly speaking *meritorious* cause of our salvation] and declaring that we ought not to do good works ? Surely your rational faculties are not so impaired, but you may perceive, those propositions are by no means of the same import.

If I say, that eating will never make me immortal, that drinking will never turn me into an angel, and that doing my work will never take me to the third heaven ; do I so much as hint that eating is useless, drinking of no service, and doing my business unprofitable ? O how does prejudice blind even men of reason and religion ! How hardly does truth go down with us, when we do not love it ! How gladly do we dress it up in a fool's coat, that we may have some pretence to despise and reject it !

If you would speak according to *strict* truth, my brethren, you would not say that I “ preach against good works, that I run down good works, &c.” which

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† See the foregoing Note.

‡ When I was younger by eleven years I said, [*You are a poor logician.*]

(31) & It appears to me, that my sermon, far from being “ the best confutation of the minutes,” is consonant to that proposition, which has given such offence : *Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition,*

is [a mistake †] as I shewed just now : but you would say, that I preach *against the [proper] merit ‡ of good works in point of salvation* : This is very true, so I do, and so I am determined to do, by God's grace, as long as I live. So did Christ and his apostles ; so do our articles and homilies ; and so the children of God have done in all ages. ¶ Those of the old testament § [far from mentioning any *proper* merit of their own, cried out : *Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 5. — *Wo is me for I am undone, because I am by nature, and have been by practice, a man of unclean lips*. Is. vi. 5.] Those of the new, prayed to be found in Christ, not having their own [pharisaic] righteousness which is by the law of works, but the [evangelical] righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 9 : And those of our Church profess, that They are not worthy to gather the crumbs under the Lord's table, and that they do not come to it, trusting in their own righteousness, or good works, but in God's manifold and great mercies thro' Jesus Christ : so far are they from thinking, that they [properly] merit salvation [either in whole or in part.] See Com. Service.

¶ Yea, I declare it as upon the house-top, of all the false doctrines that ever came out of the pit of hell, none has done such execution for Satan in the church of God [as the pharisaic conceit that we have, or may have any *proper, original* merit.] Stealing, drunkenness, and adultery have slain their thousands ; but this damnable error, which is the very root of unbelief,

† [Entirely false] is the blunt expression, I used eleven years ago.

‡ Turn back to Note 31.

(32) § Instead of this addition, eleven years ago I said [owned that all their righteousnesses were as filthy rags, Is. lxi. 6. ¶ For leaning then too much towards calvinism, I supposed that the prophet in this passage spoke of the righteousnesses of faith : but since I have dared to read my bible without prejudice, and to consult the context, I have found, that text is spoken only of the hypocritical righteousnesses of the wicked ; and in the IVth Check, p. 114, I have tried to rescue it from the hands of the antinomians, who had taught me to wrest it from its proper meaning.]

unbelief, its *ten thousands*. ☞ It blinded the pharisees, and hardened the Jews against Christ. † It plunges into everlasting fire all nominal christians, who *have a form of godliness but [to the last] deny the power thereof*.

Yea, strange as the assertion may seem to some, this [pernicious error] feeds immorality, and secretly nourishes all manner of vice. The scripture tells us, 1 Cor. vi. 9, that *neither fornicators, nor effeminate, neither thieves, nor covetous, neither drunkards nor revilers, neither unrighteous nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*. Now how comes it to pass, that so many, who are guilty of one or another of those abominations, remain as easy as if they were guiltless? Why, this damnable notion, that the merit of their works atones for the guilt of their sins, makes them think, that they shall do well enough in the end. “I get drunk now and then, says one, but I am honest.” — “I oppress or cheat my neighbour, says another, but I go to church and sacrament.” — “I love money or diversions above all things, says a third, but I bless God, I am neither a thief nor a drunkard.” — “I am passionate and swear sometimes, says a fourth, but my heart is good, and I never keep malice in my breast; besides, I’ll repent and mend some time or other before I die.” — Now the sum of all those pleas amounts to this: “I do the devil’s works, but I do good works too. I am guilty of one piece of wickedness, but not of all: and I hope, that, thro’ the merit of the good which I do, and of the evil which I have left undone hitherto, or purpose to leave undone by and by, Christ will have mercy upon me.”

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☞ Thus

† Here I leave out those words: “It [the pharisaic conceit of merit] *damned the foolish virgins, and the man who had not on a wedding garment*.” And I do it, because, upon second thoughts, it appears to me, that the boldness of the foolish virgins, and the insolence of the man, who pressed to the marriage-feast without a proper dress, exactly represent the vain confidence, with which *immoral* Solifidians cry *Lord! Lord!* and make a shining profession in the robe of self-imputed righteousness; despising the evangelical robes of real righteousness and true holiness, and calling them *cobwebs* spun by spiders out of their own bowels.

☞ Thus all our [pharisaic †] delays of conversion, and all our [self-righteous †] remorseless going on in sin and wickedness, are founded upon the doctrine of [pharisaic] merits. Well then may our Church call it “*a devilish doctrine, which is mere blasphemy against God’s mercy :*” a doctrine, which turns Christ out of his throne [by refusing him the honour of being the primary and properly meritorious cause of our salvation :] a doctrine which [by crooked ways] leads first to [worldly-mindedness or] licentiousness, as the conduct of many, who cry up the [self-righteous] merit of good works [so called] too plainly shews ; and next to pharisaic morality and formality ; and from both, except [a timely submission to] converting grace prevent it, into endless misery : for, *No doubt*, says Bishop Latimer in his sermon on twelfth day, *he that departeth out of this world in that opinion* [or, as he expresses it in the same paragraph, those who “*think to be saved by the law,*” by the first covenant] “*shall never come to heaven :*” ☞ [For they set their hearts against Christ ; and, like the obstinate pharisees of old, not only mistake the works of unbelief for good works ; but give them also the place of the *primary, meritorious cause* of eternal salvation ; when, if they were the works of faith, they would only be a *secondary evidencing cause* of it. Now, as such men cannot possibly do this, without the greatest degree of spiritual pride, impenitency, and unbelief ; it is plain, that, if they die confirmed in this grand antichristian error, they cannot be saved : for St. Paul informs us that pride is *the condemnation of the devil* ; and our Lord declares, that *except we repent we shall all perish*, and that *he who believeth not shall be damned.*]

† I add the words *pharisaic* and *self-righteous*, to come at Mr. Fulsome and his numerous fraternity, whom I now should be glad to convince of their *remorseless* going on in sin, and of their *antinomian* delays of conversion.

FOURTH

FOURTH PART.

[Having thus laid before you the destructive nature of self-righteousness,] it is time to come to the last thing proposed, which was to show, why good works cannot [properly speaking] deserve salvation in whole or in part; and to answer the old cavil, "If good works cannot save us, [by the † covenant of works] why should we trouble ourselves about them." [In doing the former, I shall attempt to give *pharisaism* a finishing stroke: and in doing the latter, I shall endeavour to guard the scriptural doctrine of grace against *antinomianism*, which prevails almost as much among professed believers, as *pharisaism* does among professed moralists.]

And first, that good works cannot [strictly speaking] merit salvation in part, much less altogether, I prove by the following arguments.

(1) We must be wholly saved by the covenant of *works*, or by the covenant of *grace*; my text shewing most clearly, that a third covenant made up of [Christless] merits [according to the first,] and divine mercy [according to the second,] is as imaginary a thing in divinity, as a fifth element made up of fire and water would be in natural philosophy. †

(2) There is less proportion between heavenly glory and our works, than between the sun and a mote that flies in the air: therefore to pretend, that they will avail towards [purchasing or properly meriting] heaven, [see the 5th note] argues want of common sense as well as want of humility.

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(3) God

(33) † This is strictly true; nevertheless we must grant, that as cold water, when it is put over the fire in a proper vessel, imbibes fiery heat, and boils without damping the fire: so our works of faith, when they are laid with proper humility on the golden altar of Christ's merits, are so impregnated with his diffusive worth, as to acquire "a rewardable condecency unto eternal life:" And this they do without mixing in the least with the *primary*, or *properly meritorious* cause of our salvation; and consequently without obscuring the Redeemer's glory.

‡ That the *works* of faith save us by the covenant of grace [next to *Christ* and *Faith*] will be proved in the *Scriptural Essay*.

(3) God has wisely done in a way that excludes [pride], *just, and the justifier of him who is boasting then?* says the answer he: *By what could be said* boasting excluded. No, *but by the law of faith* whose condition is [perfect] faith in Jesus Christ, *he, that a man is justified by the law.* Rom. iii. 27, *properly speaking* deserve; we may justly boast that part of the victory; and *only* to glory in ourselves which say, that *every man's boasting is excluded, and that the Lord.* †

ing it, I shall guard the doctrine of obedience against the antinomians.]

As this quibbling argument may puzzle the simple, and make the boasting pharisees, that use it, triumph if they had overturned the protestant doctrine of salvation by faith without [the] works [decried by St. Paul;] I beg leave to shew its weakness by a comparison.

Suppose you said to me, "Your doing the work of a parish-priest will never [merit] you an archbishoprick;" and I answered with discontent, "If doing my office will never [merit] me the see of Canterbury, why should I do it at all? I need not trouble myself about preaching any more;" would you not ask me whether a clergyman has no reason to attend his flock, but the wild and proud conceit that his labour must [deserve †] him a bishoprick. And I ask you my turn: Do you suppose, that a christian has no motive to do good works, but the wilder and prouder notion, that his good works must [properly speaking merit] him heaven? [see the 5th note.]

If therefore I can shew, that he has the strongest motives, and inducements, to abound in good works without the doctrine of [proper] merits; I hope you will drop your objection. You say, "If good works will never [*properly* merit us salvation, see the 5th note] why should we do them?" I answer, For six good reasons, each of which [in some degree †] overturns your objection.

(1)  We

(38) † This illustration is not strictly just. If the king had millions of bishopricks to give, and if he had promised to bestow one upon every diligent clergyman; solemnly declaring that all who neglect their charge, should not only miss the ecclesiastical dignity annexed to diligence, but be put to a shameful death as so many murderers of souls, these cases would then be exactly parallel. Besides, every clergyman is not a candidate for a bishoprick, but every man is a candidate for heaven. Again, a clergyman may be as happy in his parsonage as a shop in his palace: but if a man misses heaven, he sinks into hell, these glaring truths I overlooked when I was a "LATE evangelical teacher."

Formerly I said [*entirely*] but experience has taught me otherwise,

(7) We perpetually say at Church : *Glory be to the Father, as Creator ; and to the Son, as Redeemer ; and to the Holy Ghost, as sanctifier.* Christ is then to have all the glory of our *redemption* : But if our good works come in for any share in the *purchase* of heaven, we must come in also for some share of the glory of our [redemption. †] Thus Christ will no longer be the only Redeemer : we shall be † co-redeemers with him, and consequently we shall have a share in the doxology ; which is a blasphemous supposition.

(8) Our Lord himself decides the question in those remarkable words, *☞ When you have done all that is commanded you ; and where is the man that [according to the law of innocence] has done [without interruption] I shall not say all, but the one half of it ? say, We are unprofitable servants.* ☞ Now it is plain, that *unprofitable servants* do not [properly] merit in whole or in part, to sit down at their master's table, and be admitted as children to a share of his estate. Therefore, if God gives heaven to believers, it is entirely owing to his free mercy, [according to his distributive justice, and the tenour of the law of faith] thro' the merits of Jesus Christ, [derived by faith] and not at all thro' the [proper] merits of our own works.

(9) I shall close these observations by St. Paul's unanswerable argument. *If righteousness comes by the law,*

(36) † I substitute the word *redemption* for the word *salvation*, that I formerly used ; because English logic demands it. By the same reason I leave out in the end of the paragraph the words "*Saviour,*" and "*joint saviours*" which I had illogically coupled with "*Redeemer,*" and "*co-redeemers.*" For, altho' it is strictly true that no man can *redeem* his brother's soul, or even *ransom* his body from the power of the grave : yet, according to the doctrine of *secondary, instrumental causes*, it is absolutely false that no man can *save* his neighbour ; for *In doing this*, says St. Paul, *thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

(37) † I say [the law of *innocence*] to defend the works of *the law of FAITH*, by the instrumentality of which we shall be justified or saved in the great day. For these works flowing from Christ's grace, and never aspiring at any higher place, than that, which is allotted them, viz. the place of *justifying evidences*, they can never detract from the Saviour's honour or his grace,

law, If salvation comes by [the covenant of] works, then *Christ died in vain*, Gal. ii. 21. Whence it follows that if it comes *in part* by the works of the law † [of innocence,] part of Christ's sufferings were vain ; a supposition which ends in the same blasphemy [against the Mediator.]

[(10) That man might deserve any thing of God, upon the footing of *proper* worthiness, or merit of equivalence, God should stand in need of some thing, which it is in man's power to bestow : But this is absolutely impossible : for God being *self-sufficient* in his infinite fulness, is far above any want ; and man being a dependant creature, every moment supported by his Maker and Preserver, has nothing, and can do nothing, to which God has not a far greater right than man himself. This is what the apostle asserts where he says, *Who has given Him FIRST, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ?* — But much more in this remarkable passage : *Who maketh thee to differ from another ?* If thou sayest, The number of my talents and the proper use I have made of them : I ask again, Who gave thee those talents ? And who superadded grace, wisdom, and an opportunity to improve them ? — Here we must all give glory to God, and say with St. James, *Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.*

Upon this consideration the apostle proceeds to check the christian pharisee thus ; *What hast thou, that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it ?* — Whence it follows, that, tho' St. Paul himself glories in, and *boasts* of his disinterestedness, yea solemnly declares, *No man shall stop me of this boasting*, yet he did not glory in that virtue *as if he had not received it* : No ; he gave the *original* glory of it to *Him of whom, thro' whom, and to whom are all things.* The glory of bestowing original gifts upon us belongs then to God alone ; and the *original* glory of the humility with which we receive, and of the faithfulness, with which we use those gifts, belongs also to him alone ;
altho',

altho', in the very nature of things, we have such a *derived* share of that glory, as gives room to the *reasonableness* of divine *rewards*. For why should one be rewarded more than another ; yea, why should one be rewarded rather than punished, if *derived* faithfulness does not make him more *rewardable* ?

Observe however, that, altho' by this *derived* faithfulness one man makes himself to differ enough from another, for God to reward him reasonably rather than another ; yet no man can say to his Maker without satanic arrogance, " I have made myself to differ from such an one, therefore I make a lawful demand upon thy justice : Thus much have I done for thee ; do as much for me again." For while God dispenses *punishments* according to the rules of *strict* justice ; he bestows his *rewards* only according to the rules of moral aptitude and *distributive* equity, in consequence of Christ's *proper* merits, and of his own gracious promise ; all men on earth, and all angels in heaven being far less capable of *properly* deserving at God's hands, than all the mites and ants in England are, of *properly* meriting any thing at the hands of the king.]

[Lastly, what slaves earn is not their own, but the master's to whom they belong ; and what your horses get is your property, not theirs : Now as God has a thousand times more right to us, than masters to their slaves, and you to your horses ; it follows, that, supposing we were sinless, and could properly earn any thing, our profit would be God's, not ours. So true it is, that, from the creature to the Creator, the idea of *proper* merit is as contrary to *justice* as it is to *decency*.]

As the preceding arguments [against the *proper* merit of works] will, I hope, abundantly satisfy all those [modern pharisees,] who have not entirely cast away the christian revelation, I pass to the old objection of [some ignorant] papists [and injudicious protestants.] " If good works cannot [merit us heaven, (see the 5th note) or properly] save us, why should we trouble ourselves about them ?" [And in answering,

ing it, I shall guard the doctrine of obedience against the antinomians.]

As this quibbling argument may puzzle the simple, and make the boasting pharisees, that use it, triumph as if they had overturned the protestant doctrine of salvation by faith without [the] works [decried by St. Paul;] I beg leave to shew its weakness by a comparison.

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(38) † This illustration is not strictly just. If the king had millions of bishopricks to give, and if he had promised to bestow one upon every *diligent* clergyman; solemnly declaring that all who *neglect* their charge, should not only miss the ecclesiastical dignity annexed to diligence, but be put to a shameful death as so many murderers of souls, the cases would then be exactly parallel. Besides, every clergyman is not a candidate for a bishoprick, but every man is a candidate for heaven. Again, a clergyman may be as happy in his parsonage as a bishop in his palace: but if a man misses heaven, he sinks into hell. These glaring truths I overlooked when I was a "LATE evangelical preacher."

† Formerly I said [entirely] but experience has taught me otherwise.

(1) ☞ We are to do good works, to shew our obedience to our heavenly Father. ☞ As a child obeys his parents, not to *purchase* their estate, but because he is their child [and does not chuse to be disinherited :] so believers obey God, not to get heaven for their wages ; but, because he is their Father, [and they would not provoke him to disinherit them. †]

(2) ☞ We are to abound in all good works, to be justified before men [now, and before the Judge of all the earth in the great day ;] and to shew that our faith is saving. St. James strongly insists upon this, chap. ii. 18. ☞ *Shew me thy faith without thy works, says he, and I will shew thee my faith by my works :* That is, Thou sayest, thou hast faith, [because thou wast once justified by faith ;] but thou doest not the works of a believer : thou canst follow vanity, and conform to this evil world : thou canst swear or break the sabbath ; lie, cheat, or get drunk ; rail at thy neighbour, or live in uncleanness : in a word, thou canst do one or another of the devil's works : Thy works therefore give thee the lie, and shew that thy faith is [now like] the devil's faith ; for if *faith without works is dead*, how doubly dead must faith with *bad* works be ! † [And how absurd is it to suppose, that thou canst be *instrumentally* justified by a *dead* faith, or *declaratively* justified by *bad* works, either before men or in the sight of God !] But *I will shew thee my faith by my works*, adds the apostle : i. e. By constantly abstaining from all evil works, and steadily walking in all sorts of good works, I will make thee confess, that

(39) † This argument is weak without the additions. Our Lord informs us, that when the Father in the gospel says to his fair-spoken child, *SON, Go work to-day in my vineyard*, he answers, *I go, Sir, and goes not :* And God himself says, *I have nourished and brought up CHILDREN, but they have rebelled against me.* Wo to the parents, who have such children, and have no power to cut off an entail !

(40) † If this single clause of my old sermon stands, so will the Minutes and the Checks. But the whole argument is a mere jest, if a man that wallows in adultery, murder, or incest, may have as true, justifying faith, as David had when he killed Goliath.

that I am really *in Christ a new creature*, and that my faith is living and genuine.

(3) Our Saviour told his disciples, that they were to  do good works, not to purchase heaven, but that others might be stirred up to serve God. You then, that have found the way of salvation by Christ, *let your light so shine before men, that even they, who speak evil of the doctrine of faith, seeing your good works may † glorify your Father who is in heaven.*  Mat. v. 16.

(4)  We are to do good works out of *gratitude* and *love* to our dear Redeemer, who having [conditionally] purchased heaven for us with his precious blood,  asks the small return of our love and obedience. *If you love me*, says he, *keep my commandments*, John xiv. 15. [This motive is noble, and continues powerful so long as we *keep our first love*. But alas ! it has little force with regard to the myriads, that rather *fear* than love God : And it has lost its force in all those, who *have denied the faith*, or *made shipwreck of it*, or *cast off their first faith*, and consequently their *first love*, and their *first gratitude*. The multitude of these, in all ages, has been innumerable. I fear, we might say of justified believers, what our Lord did of the cleansed lepers : *Were there not ten cleansed ? but where are the nine ?* Alas ! like the apostates mentioned by St. Paul, they *are turned aside* after the flesh, after the world, *after fables*, after antinomian dotages, after *vain jangling*, after *Satan himself*. 1 Tim. v. 15.]

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(5) We

(41) † This argument is quite frivolous, if my late opponent is right. *How has many a poor soul*, says he, *who has been faithless thro' the fear of man, even blessed God for Peter's denial !* Five Letters. SECOND edition revised, p. 40. Hence it appears, that denying Christ with oaths and curses, will cause "*many a poor soul to bless God*," i. e. to *glorify our heavenly Father*. Now if *horrid crimes* do this as well as *good works*, is it not absurd to inforce the practice of *good works*, by saying, that *they alone* have that blessed effect ? But my opponent may easily get over this difficulty before those, whose battles he fights. He needs only charge me with *disingenuity* for not quoting the THIRD revised edition of his book, if he has published such a one.

(5) We are to be careful to maintain good works, [not only that we may not lose our confidence in God, 1 John iii. 19, &c. but also] that we may nourish and increase our faith or spiritual life; [or, to use the language of St. James, that *faith may work with our works*, and that *by works our faith may be made perfect*.] As a man [in health, who is † threatened by no danger,] does not walk that his walking may procure him life [or save his life from destruction;] but that he may preserve his health, and [add to] his activity: So a believer, does not walk in good works to get [an initial life of grace, or a primary title to an] eternal life [of glory:] but to keep up and increase the vigour of his faith, by which he has [already a title to, and the earnest of] eternal life [in heaven. For as the best health without any exercise is soon destroyed, so the strongest faith without works will soon droop and die. Hence it is that St. Paul exhorts us to *Hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away by refusing to walk in good works, concerning faith have made shipwreck*.]

(6) ¶ We are not to do good works to obtain heaven by them [as if they were the *primary*, and *properly meritorious* cause of our salvation.] This † proud, antichristian motive would poison the best doings of the greatest saints, if *saints* could thus trample upon the blood of their Saviour: Such a wild conceit being only the pharisee's cleaner way to hell. But we are to do them, because they shall be *rewarded* in heaven [as

(42) † Formerly I did not consider that as Noah *walked* into the ark, and Lot out of Sodom, to save their lives: so sinners are called to turn from their iniquity, and *do* that which is lawful and right to *save* their souls alive. Nor did I observe, that saints are commanded to *walk in good works*, lest the destroyer overtake them, and they become *sons of perdition*. However, in Babel, such capital oversights did me "*much credit*."

(43) † Here I leave out the word *selfish*, as being ambiguous. It is not *selfishness*, but true wisdom and well-ordered self-love, *evangelically* to labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life. Not to do it is the height of Laodicean stupidity, or antinomian conceit.

[as well as †] with heaven. ☞ To understand this we must remember, that, according to the gospel and our liturgy, God *opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers* : [because *true believers* are always *true workers* ; true faith always working by love to God's commandments. Next to Christ then, to speak the language of some injudicious divines,] *Faith alone*, when it *works by love*, takes us to heaven : {Or rather, to avoid an apparent contradiction, *Faith* and its *works* are the way to heaven : } But as there are stars of different magnitude in the material heaven, so also in the spiritual. Some who, like St. Paul, have eminently shined by *the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love*, shall shine like the brightest stars, [or the sun :] and ☞ others, who, like the dying thief and infants, have had [little † or] no time to shew their faith [or holiness] by their works, shall enjoy a less degree of glorious bliss : But all shall ascribe the whole of their salvation only to the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood and spirit, ☞ according to St. John's vision : *I beheld, and lo a great multitude of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, with palms in their hands, cloathed with robes, that they had washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb : And* [while our Lord said to them by his gra-

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(44) † Here I leave out *alibi* not, and supply *as well as*, for the reasons assigned in the *Scriptural Essay*.

(45) † Mr. H. triumphs in his *Finishing Stroke*, p. 50, last note, thro' my omission of those two words. But without having recourse to "*magical power*," or even to "*Logica Helvetica*," to reconcile my sermon with my Checks ; I desire unprejudiced Calvinists to mention any one besides the dying thief, that ever evidenced his faith by confessing Christ, when his very apostles denied or forsook him ; by openly praying to him, when the multitudes reviled him ; by humbly pleading guilty before thousands ; by publicly defending injured innocence ; by boldly reproving blasphemy ; by kindly admonishing his fellow-malefactor ; and by fully acknowledging Christ's *kingly* office, when he was crowned with thorns, and hanging on the cross ? Did St. John, did Mary Magdalen, did even the Virgin Mary, *show their faith* by such glorious *works*, under such unfavourable circumstances ? O ye Solidifiers, where is your attention ?

tious looks, according to the doctrine of secondary, instrumental causes, *Walk with me in white, for you are WORTHY, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you, for I was hungry and ye gave me meat, &c.*] they cried [according to the doctrine of primary and properly-meritorious causes] not “*Salvation to our endeavours and good works;*” but *Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

[Thus, by the rules of celestial courtesy, to which our Lord vouchsafes to submit in glory; while the saints *justly* draw a veil over their works of faith, to extol *only* their Saviour’s merits; He *kindly* passes over his own blood and righteousness, to make mention *only* of their works and obedience. They, setting their seal to the first gospel axiom, shout with great truth, “*Salvation to God and the Lamb:* And He, setting his seal to the second gospel-axiom, replies with great condescension: *Salvation to them that are worthy! Eternal salvation to all that obey me.* Rev. iii. + Heb. v. 9.]

[Therefore, notwithstanding the perpetual assaults of proud pharisees, and of self-humbled antinomians; the two gospel-axioms stand unshaken upon the two fundamental, inseparable doctrines of faith and works — of *proper* merit in Christ, and *derived* worthiness in his members. Penitent believers freely receive all from the God of grace and mercy, thro’ Christ; and humble workers freely return all to the God of holiness and glory, thro’ the same adorable Mediator. Thus God has *all the honour of freely bestowing* upon us a crown of righteousness, in a way of judicious mercy and distributive justice; while we, *thro’ grace*, have † *all the honour of freely receiving it*, in a way of penitential

(46) † OBJECTION. “*We have all the honour thro’ grace!* (says a friend of voluntary humility) What honour can you possibly ascribe to man, when you have already ascribed *all* honour to God? But one, who begins his sermon by pleading for *merit*, may well conclude it by taking from God part of his *honour, dominion, and praise.*” —

ANSWER,

penitential faith and obedient gratitude. To him therefore, one eternal Jehovah in Father Son and Holy Ghost, be ascribed *all* the merit, honour, praise, and dominion, *worthy* of a God, for ever and ever.]

END OF THE GUARDED SERMON.

ANSWER. I plead only for an interest in Christ's *merits* thro' faith and the works of faith. This interest I call *derived worthiness*, which would be as dishonourable to Christ, as it is honourable to believers. I confess also, that I aspire at the *honour* of shouting in heaven, *All-
sujab to God and the Lamb!* In the mean time I hope, that I may pay an inferior *honour* to all men, ascribe *derived dominion* to the king, bestow *deserved praise* upon my pious opponents, and claim the *honour* of being their obedient servant in Christ, without robbing the Lamb of his peculiar *worthiness* and God of his proper *honour, dominion, and praise*.



A P P E N D I X.

I Flatter myself that the preceding discourse shews, (1) that it is very possible to preach *free grace*, without directly or indirectly preaching Calvinism and *free wrath*: And (2) that those who charge Mr. Wesley and me with subverting the articles of our Church, which guard the doctrine of grace, do us great wrong. Should God spare me, I shall also bear my testimony to the truth of the doctrine of *conditional* Predestination and Election, maintained in the 17th article, to which I have not had an opportunity of setting my seal in this work.

As I have honestly laid my helvetic bluntness, and antinomian mistakes before the public in my notes; I am not conscious of having misrepresented my old sermon in my enlarged discourse. Should however the *keener* eyes of my opponents discover any real mis-

takes in my additions, &c. upon information I shall be glad to acknowledge and rectify it. Two or three sentences I have left out, merely because they formed *vain* repetitions, without adding any thing to the sense. But, whenever I have, for conscience sake, made any alteration, that *affects*, or *seems* to affect the doctrine; I have informed the reader of it, and of my reason for it in a note; that he may judge whether I was right twelve years ago, or whether I am now: And where there is no such note at the bottom of the page, there is an addition in the context, directing to the *FIRST* note, where the alteration is acknowledged, and accounted for according to the reasonable condition, which I have made in the preface.

I particularly recommend the perusal of *that* note, of the *first*, and of the *twenty-first* to those, who do not yet see their way thro' the streights of pharisaism and antinomianism, thro' which I have been obliged to steer my course in handling a text, which, of all others, *seems* at first sight best calculated to countenance the mistakes of my opponents.

Sharp-sighted readers will see by my sermon, that nothing is more difficult than *rightly to divide the word of God*. The ways of *Truth* and *Error* lie close together, tho' they never coincide. When some preachers say, that "The road to heaven passes very near the mouth of hell," they do not mean, that the road to heaven and the road to hell are one and the same. If I assert, that the way of *Truth* runs parallel to the ditch of *Error*, I by no means intend to confound them. Let *Error* therefore come, in some things, ever so near *Truth*, yet it can no more be the *Truth*, than a filthy ditch, that runs parallel to a good road, can be the road.

You wonder at the athletic strength of Milo, that brawny man. who stands like an anvil under the bruising fist of his antagonist: Thro' the flowery paths of youth and childhood trace him back to his cradle; and, if you please, consider him unborn: He is Milo still. Nay view him just conceived or quickened, and
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tho' your naked eye scarcely discovers the *punctum saliens*, by which he differs from a non-entity or a lifeless thing ; yet even then the difference between him and a non-entity is not only *real*, but *prodigious* ; for it is the vast difference between *something* and *nothing*, between *life* and *no life* — In like manner trace back Truth to its first stamina ; investigate it till you find its *punctum saliens*, its first difference from Error ; and even then, you will see an *essential*, a *capital* difference between them, tho' your short-sighted or inattentive neighbour can perceive none.

It is often a thing little in appearance, that turns the scale of truth ; nevertheless, the difference between a scale *turned* or *not turned*, is as real as the difference between a *just* and a *false* weight, between *right* and *wrong*. I make this observation : (1) To show that altho' my opponents come very near me in some things, and I go very near them in others, yet the difference between us is as essential as the difference between *light* and *darkness*, *truth* and *error* : And (2) to remind them and myself, that we ought so much the more to exercise christian forbearance towards each other, as we find it difficult, whenever we do not stand upon our guard, to do justice to every part of the Truth, without seeming to dissent even from ourselves. However, our short-sightedness and twilight knowledge do not alter the nature of things. The truth of the anti-pharisaic and anti-Crispian gospel is as immutable as its eternal Author ; and whether I have marked out its boundaries with a tolerable degree of justness or not, I must say as the heathen poet :

Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines,
Quos ultra citra que nequit consistere rectum. †

† Truth is confined within her firm bounds : nay, there is a middle line equally distant from all extremes ; on that line she stands, and to miss her, you need only step over it to the right hand or to the left.

A
SCRIPTURAL ESSAY

On the astonishing rewardableness of Works according to the Covenant of Grace :

CONTAINING

- I. A VARIETY of plain Scriptures, which shew, that HEAVEN ITSELF is the gracious REWARD of the WORKS of Faith, and that Believers may lose that Reward by bad Works. — II. AN ANSWER to the most plausible Objections of the Solifidians against this Doctrine. — III. SOME REFLECTIONS upon the unreasonable-ness of those, who scorn to work with an Eye to the Reward, that God offers to excite us to Obedience.

To the Law and to the Testimony. Is. viii. 8.

FIRST PART.

HAVING particularly guarded in the preceding discourse the doctrine of SALVATION by the covenant of grace, and having endeavoured to secure the foundation of the gospel against the unwearied attacks of the Pharisees ; I shall now particularly guard the WORKS of the covenant of grace, and by that means I shall secure the superstructure against the perpetual assaults of the Antinomians : a part of my work this, which is so much the more important, as the use of a strong foundation is only to bear up an useful structure.

None but fools act without motive. To deprive a wise man of every motive to act, is to keep him in total inaction : and to rob him of some grand motive, is considerably to weaken his willingness to act, or his fervour in acting. The burning love of God is undoubtedly

doubtedly the most generous motive to obedience : but alas ! thousands of good men, like Cornelius, are yet strangers to that powerful sensation *shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost* : In thousands of weak believers, love is not yet properly kindled ; it is rather *a smoking flax* than a blazing fire : in thousands of Laodicean professors it is scarce *lukewarm* ; and in all apostates *it is waxed cold*. Therefore, in the present, sickly state of the church militant, it is as absurd in preachers, to urge no motive of good works but *grateful love* ; as it would be in physicians to insist, that a *good stomach* must be the only motive, from which their patients ought to take either food or physic.

Our Lord far from countenancing our doctrinal refinements in this respect, perpetually secures the practice of good works by *promising heaven* to all that persevere in doing them ; while he deters us from sin, by *threatening destruction* to all that persist in committing it ; working thus alternately upon our *hopes* and *fears*, these powerful springs of action in the human breast.

The force of this double incentive to practical religion, I greatly weakened ; when, being carried away by the stream of solifidianism, I rashly said in my old † sermon, after some of our reformers, that “ good works shall be rewarded *in* heaven and eternal life, altho’ not *with* eternal life and heaven.” An antinomian error this, which I again publicly renounce, and against which I enter the following scriptural protest.

If the oracles of God command us to work FROM an *initial* life of *grace*, FOR an *eternal* life of *glory* ; frequently annexing the promise of heavenly bliss to good works, and threatening all *workers of iniquity* with hell-torments ; it follows, that heaven will be the *gracious reward* of good works, and hell the *just wages* of bad ones.

I readily grant however, that, if we consider ourselves merely as *sinners*, in the light of the *first* gospel-axiom, and according to the *covenant of works*, which we

† See the notes 29, and 44.

we have so frequently broken ; heaven is MERELY the GIFT of God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ : for, according to *that* covenant, destruction is the wages of all who have committed sin. But, if we are *converted* sinners, or obedient *believers* ; and if we consider ourselves in the light of the *second* gospel axiom, and according to the *covenant of grace* ; every unprejudiced person, who believes the bible, must allow that heaven is the gracious REWARD of our works of faith.

An illustration may help the reader to see the justness of this distinction — A charitable nobleman discharges the debts of ten insolvent prisoners, sets them up in great or little farms, according to their respective abilities ; and laying down a thousand pounds before them, he says : “ I have already done much for you, but I will do more still. I freely give you this purse, to encourage your industry. You shall share this gold among you, if you manage your farms according to my directions : but if you let your fields be over-run with thorns, you shall not only lose the bounty I design for the industrious, but forfeit all my preceding favours.” Now who does not see, that the thousand pounds thus laid down, are a *free gift* of the nobleman ; that nevertheless, upon the performance of the condition or terms he has fixed, they become a *gracious reward* of industry ; and that consequently, the obtaining of this reward turns now entirely upon the *works of industry* performed by the farmers.

Just so eternal salvation is the *free gift* of God thro' Jesus Christ ; and yet the *obtaining* of it [on the part of adults] turns entirely upon their *works of faith* ; that is, upon their *works* as well as upon their *faith*. Hence the scripture says indifferently, *He that BELIEVETH is NOT CONDEMNED* ; and, *If thou DOEST WELL shalt thou not be ACCEPTED ? All that BELIEVE are JUSTIFIED* ; and, *He that WORKETH righteousness is ACCEPTED*.—Our Lord, speaking of a weeping penitent, says equally : *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she LOVED much* ; and, *Thy sins are forgiven,*
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thy FAITH hath saved thee. — As for St. Paul, tho' he always justly excludes the works of unbelief, and merely ceremonial works, yet he so joins *faith*, and the *works* of faith, as to shew us, they are equally necessary to eternal salvation : *There is no condemnation*, says he, *to them that are in Christ* by faith : [Here is the Pharisee's portion] *who WALK not after the flesh, but after the spirit* [Here is the Antinomian's portion.] Hence it appears, that living faith *now* and always works righteousness ; and that the works of righteousness *now* † and always accompany faith, so long as it remains *living*.

' I know this is the doctrine,' says judicious Mr. Baxter, ' that will have the loudest outcries raised against it ; and will make some cry out, Heresy, Popery, Socinianism ! and what not ? For my own part the Searcher of hearts knoweth, that not singularity, or any good will to Popery provoketh me to entertain it : but that I have earnestly fought the Lord's direction upon my knees, before I durst adventure on it ; - and that I resisted the light of this conclusion as long as I was able.' — May this bright testimony make way for an illuminated cloud of prophets and apostles ! and may the sun of righteousness rising behind it, so scatter the shades of error, that we may awake out of our laodicean sleep, and antinomian dreams, and see a glorious, unclouded gospel-day !

That in subordination to Christ our *eternal* salvation depends upon good works, i. e. upon the works of faith, will, I think, appear indubitable to them that believe the bible, and candidly consider the following scriptures, in which HEAVEN and eternal life IN GLORY are suspended upon *works*, if they spring from a sincere *belief* in the light of our dispensation ; I say, if they spring from true *faith*, it being absolutely impossible for an *heathen*, and much more for a *christian*,

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† I use the word *now*, to stop up the antinomian gap, which one of my opponents tries to keep open by insinuating, that tho' a true believer may commit adultery and murder *now*, yet he will *always* work righteousness before he die.

to work righteousness without BELIEVING in some degree *that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, as well as the punisher of them that presumptuously sin against him : *For without faith it is impossible to please God* ; all faithless works springing merely from superstition, like those of Baal's priests, or from hypocrisy like those of the pharisees. Having thus guarded again the doctrine of FAITH, I produce some of the many scriptures that *directly or indirectly* annex the above-mentioned reward to WORKS : And,

(1) *To consideration, conversion, and exercising ourselves to godliness.* — ‘ Because he *considereth*, and *turneth* away from all his transgressions, &c. he shall surely *live*, he shall not *die*. — When the wicked man *turneth* away from his wickedness, &c. he shall *save his soul alive*. — Wherefore *turn* yourselves and *live* ye. — *Exercise thyself unto godliness*, for it is profitable unto all things ; having the promise of the *life* that now is, and that *which is to come*.’

(2) *To doing the will of God.* — ‘ He that *doeth* the will of my Father, shall enter into the kingdom of *heaven*. — He that *doeth* the will of God, *abideth for ever*. — Whosoever shall *do* the will of God, the same is my *brother and sister* — i. e. the same is an *heir* of God, and a *joint-heir* with Christ.’

(3) *To confessing Christ, and calling upon the name of the Lord.* — ‘ With the mouth *confession is made to salvation*. — Whosoever therefore shall *confess* me before men, him will I *confess* also before my Father : But whosoever shall *deny* me before men, him will I also *deny* before my Father. — Whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord, shall be *saved*.’

(4) *To self-denial* : ‘ If thy hand offend thee, *cut it off* : It is better for thee to enter into *life* maimed, than having two hands to go to *hell*, &c. And if thine eye offend thee, *pluck it out* : It is better for thee to enter into the *kingdom of God* with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into *hell-fire*. — There is no man, that *hath left* house, or brethren, &c.

‘ &c. for my sake and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundred fold now, and in the world to come eternal life.—He that *loseth* his life for my sake, shall find it, &c.—He that *hateth* his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.’—And our Lord supposes that by “*gaining the world*,” a man may “*lose his own soul*.” For, according to the covenant of grace, even reprobates are not totally lost, till they make themselves *sons of perdition* like Judas ; i. e. till they personally and absolutely *lose their own souls* and heaven, by their personal and obstinate pursuit of worldly things.

(5) *To diligent labour, and earnest endeavours.*—‘ O man of God, lay hold on eternal life — Work out your own salvation. — Labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life — Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. — In so doing thou shalt save thyself. — Narrow is the gate that leads to life. — Strive to enter in. — The violent press into the kingdom of God, and take it by force.’

(6) *To keeping the commandments.*—‘ Blessed are they that do his commandments, &c. that they may enter thro’ the gates into the city,’ i. e. into heaven. — There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that worketh abomination.—If thou wilt enter into life, † keep the commandments. — Thou hast answered right : This do and thou shalt live. — There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy :’ [some of whose laws run thus:] ‘ Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven — Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy — With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged — For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. — BLESSED are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God,’ [and, of course, the heirs of the kingdom.] — The king shall say unto them, Come, ye BLESSED of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,

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‘ for

† See the excellent comment of our church upon these words of our Lord, IVth Check, p. 27.

' for I was hungry and ye gave me meat, &c.—What-
 ' soever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, knowing
 ' that of the Lord ye shall receive the REWARD of the
 ' inheritance : But he that does wrong, shall receive for
 ' the wrong which he hath done, and there is no re-
 ' spect of persons. — Be ye therefore followers of
 ' God as dear children, &c. for this ye know, that no
 ' whoremonger, &c. hath ANY inheritance in the king-
 ' dom of God.—The works of the flesh are manifest,
 ' which are these, adultery, &c. of which I tell you
 [believers] ' that they, who do such things, shall not
 ' inherit the kingdom of God.'

(7) *To running, fighting, faithfully laying up treasure
 in heaven, and feeding the flock of God.* — ' They, who
 ' run in a race, run all ; but one receiveth the prize :
 ' So run that you may obtain. Now they are tempe-
 ' rate in all things to obtain a corruptible crown ; but
 ' we, an incorruptible. I therefore so run—fight—and
 ' bring my body into subjection,' [that I may obtain :]
 ' lest I myself should be cast away : ' i. e. should not
 be approved of, should be rejected, and lose my incor-
 ruptible crown. — ' Fight the good fight of faith, lay
 ' hold on eternal life. — Lay up treasure in heaven. —
 ' Make yourselves friends with the mammon of un-
 ' righteousness, that, when you fail on earth, they
 ' may receive you into everlasting habitations —
 ' Charge them who are rich, that they do good, that
 ' they be rich in good works, laying up in store for
 ' themselves a good foundation against the time to
 ' come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. — Feed
 ' the flock of God, &c. being examples to the flock,
 ' and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall
 ' receive the crown of glory, that fadeth not away.'

(8) *To love and charity.* ' Tho' I have all faith,
 ' &c. and have no charity, I am nothing.—She,' [the
 woman] ' shall be saved, &c. if they,' [womankind]
 ' continue in faith and charity. — Whosoever hateth
 ' his brother hath not eternal life — He that loveth not
 ' his brother, abideth in death — We know we have
 ' passed from death unto life because we love the bre-
 ' thern

‘ thren — If any man *love not* the Lord Jesus, let him
 ‘ be *anathema* — The *crown of life*, which the Lord
 ‘ hath promised to them that *love him*.’

(9) *To a godly walk.* ‘ There is *no condemnation*
 ‘ to them, &c. that *walk NOT* after the flesh — As
 ‘ many as *walk* according to this rule, *mercy* [be, or
 ‘ will be] on them. — If we *walk* in the light’ [of
 ‘ good works, Mat. v. 15.] ‘ the blood of Christ cleans-
 ‘ eth us from all sin. — The Lord will give grace and
 ‘ glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them
 ‘ that *walk* uprightly. — Many’ [fallen believers]
 ‘ *walk*, &c. enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end
 ‘ is *destruction*.’

(10) *To persevering watchfulness, faithfulness, prayer;*
 ‘ &c. ‘ He that *endureth* unto the end, the same shall be
 ‘ saved. — Be *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee
 ‘ the *crown of life*. — Blessed is the man that *endureth*
 ‘ temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the
 ‘ *crown of life*. — *Because* thou hast kept the word of
 ‘ my patience, I will also keep thee, &c. — To him
 ‘ that *overcometh*, will I grant to sit with me in my
 ‘ throne. — To him that *keepeth* my works unto the
 ‘ end, &c. will I give the *morning star*. — Take heed
 ‘ to yourselves, &c. *watch* and *pray* always, that ye
 ‘ may be counted *worthy to escape*, &c. and to stand
 ‘ before the Son of man.’ In a word,

(11) *To patient continuance in mortifying the deeds of*
 ‘ the body, and in well doing. — ‘ If ye live after the flesh,
 ‘ ye shall die; but if ye thro’ the spirit *mortify* the
 ‘ deeds of the body, ye shall *live*. — For he that *soweth*
 ‘ to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap *perdition*; but he
 ‘ that *soweth* to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap *life*
 ‘ *everlasting*: And let us not be weary in *well-doing*,
 ‘ for in due season we shall REAP’ [not, if we faint or
 ‘ not, but] ‘ IF we faint not. — He that *reapeth* receiv-
 ‘ eth *wages*, and gathereth fruit unto *life eternal*. —
 ‘ Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end *ever-*
 ‘ *lasting life*.’ — God, at the revelation of his *righteous*
 ‘ judgment, will render to every man according to his
 ‘ deeds: *eternal life* to them, who, by patient conti-

‘ nuance in *well-doing*, seek for *glory*.—Anguish upon
 ‘ every soul of man that *does evil*, &c. but *glory* to
 ‘ every man that *worketh good*, &c. for there is no re-
 ‘ spect of persons with God.’

Is it not astonishing, that, in sight of so many plain scriptures, the Solifidians should still ridicule the passport of good works, and give it to the winds as a “paper-kite”? However, if the preceding texts do not appear sufficient, I can send another volley of gospel-truths, to show that the initial salvation of believers themselves may be *lost thro’* bad works.

‘ I know thy *works*, &c. so then because thou art
 ‘ lukewarm I will spue thee out of my mouth.—What
 ‘ doth it profit, my brethren, tho’ a man’ [*τὴν* any one,
 and two verses below, any one of you, James ii. 14,
 16,] ‘ say he hath faith, and hath not works’ [*now*?]
 ‘ Can faith save him? &c. Faith, if it hath not
 ‘ works, is dead being alone. — Grudge not one
 ‘ against another, brethren, lest ye be *damned*’ [in
 the original it is the same word, which is rendered
damned, Mark xvi. 16.] — ‘ If we suffer, we shall also
 ‘ reign with him : if *we* [believers] *deny* him, he will
 ‘ also deny *us*. — Add to your faith *virtue*, &c. cha-
 ‘ rity, &c. if ye *do* these things ye shall never fall,
 ‘ for *so* an ENTRANCE shall be ministered unto you
 ‘ abundantly into the *everlasting kingdom* of our Lord.
 ‘ — It had been *better* for them, that have escaped
 ‘ the pollutions of the world thro’ the *knowledge of*
 ‘ *our Saviour*, ‘[i. e. for believers]’ not to have known
 ‘ the way of righteousness, than after they have
 ‘ known it, to *turn* from the *holy commandment* deli-
 ‘ vered unto them. — *Every* tree, that bringeth not
 ‘ forth *good fruit*, is *cut down*, and cast into the *fire*.—
 ‘ *Every* branch IN ME, that beareth *not* fruit, my
 ‘ Father taketh away — Abide in me, &c. If a man
 ‘ abide not in me’ [by keeping my commandments in
 faith] ‘ he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ;
 ‘ and’ [he shall share the fate of the branches that
 have *really* belonged to the natural vine, and now bear
 no more fruit]. ‘ men gather them, and cast them
 K 3 ‘ into

‘into the fire, and they are burned.’ — The fig-tree in the Lord’s moral vineyard is cut down, for *not bearing fruit*. — ‘Him that *finneth* I will blot out of my book — Some having put away a *good conscience*, concerning *faith* have made *shipwreck* — Such as *turn back* to their own wickedness, the Lord shall lead them forth with the *evil doers*. — Towards thee, goodness, if [by continuing in obedience] thou *continue* in his goodness, otherwise thou shalt be *cut off*.’

Again, ‘For the wickedness of their *doings*, I will drive them out of my house, I will *love* them *no more* — Some are already *turned aside* after Satan — having *damnation* because they have *cast off* their *first faith* — the faith that *works* by love — the mystery of faith kept in a *pure conscience* — the *faith unfeigned*’ [that the apostle couples with] ‘a *good conscience* — the faith that is made perfect by works’ — the faith that cries like Rachel, *Give me children, give me good works, or else I die* — the faith that faints without obedience, and actually *dies* by bad works; the following scriptures abundantly proving that *faith*, and consequently *the just who lives by faith*, can *die by bad works*.

‘When a righteous man † doth *turn* from his *righteousness*, and commit iniquity, &c. he shall *DIE* in his sin, and his *righteousness*, which he has done, shall *not* be remembered.’ Ezek. iii. 20. — Again,
‘When

† That this is spoken of a *truly-righteous* man, i. e. of a believer, appears from the following reasons: (1) The righteous here mentioned, is opposed to the *wicked* mentioned in the context: As surely then as the word *wicked* means *there* one *really-wicked*, so does the word *righteous* mean *here* one *truly-righteous*. (2) The righteous man’s turning from his righteousness, is opposed to the wicked man’s turning from his iniquity: If therefore the righteous man’s righteousness is to be understood of *feigned* goodness, so the wicked man’s iniquity must be understood of *feigned* iniquity. (3) The crime of the righteous man here spoken of is *turning from his righteousness*: but if his righteousness were only an hypocritical righteousness, he would rather deserve to be commended for renouncing it; a wicked, sly pharisee being more odious to God than a barefaced sinner, who has honestly

* When the *righteous*, &c. *does* according to all the
 * *abominations* that the wicked man does, shall he
 * *live* ? All his *righteousness*, that he has *done*, shall
 * not be mentioned : in his *trespass* that he hath tres-
 * passed, and in his *sin* that he hath sinned, in them
 * shall he *DIE*.' Ezek. xviii. 24.—Once more : ' The
 * righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him
 * in the day of his transgression, &c. When I say to
 * the *righteous*, that he shall *surely live* ; † if he trust
 * to his righteousness, and *commit* iniquity he shall
 * *die* for it.' Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

It seems, that God foreseeing, the Solidians would
 be hard of belief, notwithstanding the great ado they
 make about *faith*, condescended to their infirmity,
 and kindly spoke the same thing over and over ; for,
 setting again the broad seal of heaven to the truth
 that chiefly guards the second gospel-axiom, he says
 for the fourth time, ' When the righteous *turneth*
 * from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he
 * shall even *DIE thereby* : But if the wicked *turns* from
 * his wickedness, and *doth* that which is lawful and
 * right, he shall *LIVE thereby*.' Ezek. xxxiii. 18, 19.

If Ezekiel is not allowed to be a competent judge,
 let *Christ himself* be heard : ' Then his Lord said unto
 * him : O thou wicked servant, I *forgave* thee *all* that
 * debt, &c. Shouldest not thou also have had com-
 * passion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on
 * thee ? And his Lord was *wroth*, and delivered him
 * to the *tormentors*.' Mat. xviii. 26, &c.

All

honestly enough not to put on the mask of religion, Rev. iii. 15. —
 (4) Part of this apostate's *punishment* will consist in *not* having the
righteousness that he has done remembered : but if his righteousness is a
 false righteousness, or mere hypocrisy, the divine *threatening* proves a
 precious *promise* ; for you cannot please an hypocrite better, than by
 assuring him, that his hypocrisy shall never be remembered. What a
 pity is it, that, to defend our mistakes we should fix egregious non-
 sense, and gross contradiction upon the only *wise* God !

† These words are another indubitable proof, that *the righteous*
 here mentioned is a *truly-righteous* person ; as the holy and true God
 could never say to a wicked pharisee, that he *shall surely live*.

All the preceding scriptures are thus summed up by our Lord, Mat. xxv. 46, *These* [the persons who have not finally done the works of faith] *shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous* [those who have done them to the end, at least from the time of their re-conversion if they were backsliders] *shall go into eternal life.* This doctrine agrees perfectly with the conclusion of the sermon on the mount: *Whoever HEARETH these sayings of mine, and DOTH THEM; I will liken him to a WISE man, who built his house upon a rock: and every one that HEARETH these sayings of mine, and DOTH THEM NOT, shall be likened unto a FOOLISH man, who built his house upon the sand.* — Nay, this is Christ's explicit doctrine: No words can be plainer than these: *They that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have DONE GOOD, unto the resurrection of LIFE; and they that have DONE EVIL, unto the resurrection of CONDEMNATION,* John v. 29. All creeds therefore, like that of St. Athanasius, and all faith, must end in practice. This is a grand article of what might, with peculiar propriety, be called *the catholic faith* — the faith that is common to, and essential under *all* the dispensations of the everlasting gospel, in *all* countries and ages — “the faith, which except a man believe *faithfully*,” i. e. so as to *work righteousness* like the good and *faithful* servant, “he cannot be saved.”

SECOND PART.

As some difficulties probably rise in the reader's mind against the preceding doctrine, it may not be amiss to produce them in the form of objections, and to answer them more fully than I have yet done.

I. OBJECTION. “All the scriptures, that you have produced, are nothing but *Descriptions* of those who shall be saved or damned: You have therefore no ground to infer from such texts, that in the great day our works of faith shall be rewarded with an eternal life of glory, and our bad works punished with eternal death.”

Ans,

ANSWER. Of all the paradoxes advanced by mistaken divines, your *assertion* is perhaps the greatest. You have no more ground for it, than I have for saying, that England is a lawless kingdom, and that all the promises of rewards, and threatnings of punishments, stamped with the authority of the legislative power, are no legal sanctions. If I seriously maintained, that the bestowing of public bounties upon the inventors of useful arts — that the discharge of some prisoners, and the condemnation of others, according to the statutes of the realm, are things which take place without any respect to law — that the acts of parliament are mere *descriptions* of persons, which the government *rewards*, *acquits*, or *punishes* without any respect to *worthiness*, *innocence*, or *demerit* — and that the judges absolve or condemn criminals merely out of *free grace* and *free wrath* — if I maintained a paradox so dishonourable to the government, and so contrary to common sense, would you not be astonished? And if I gave the name of *Papist* to all that did not receive my error as gospel, would you not recommend me to a dose of Dr. Monro's hellebore? — And are they much wiser, who fix the foul blot upon the divine government, and make the protestants believe, that the sanctions of the King of kings, and the judicial dictates of Him who judges the world in righteousness, are not laws and sentences, but *representations* and *descriptions*?

A comparison will shew the frivolousness of your objection: There is, if I mistake not, a statute that condemns an highwayman to be hanged, and allows a reward of forty pounds to the person that takes him. A counsellor observes, that this statute was undoubtedly made to deter people from going upon the highway, and to encourage the taking of robbers. Not so, says a lawyer from Geneva; tho' robbers are hanged *according to law*, yet the men that take them are not *legally* rewarded; the sum mentioned in the statute is given them of free, gratuitous, undeserved, unmerited, distinguishing grace. — Nay, says the counsellor,

counsellor, if they do not deserve the forty pounds more than other people, that sum might as well be bestowed upon the highwaymen themselves, as upon those who take them at the hazard of their life.—“ And so it might, says the Geneva lawyer : for altho’ poor, blind legalists make people believe, that the promissory part of the law was made to excite people to exert themselves in the taking of robbers ; yet we know better at Geneva ; and I inform you, that the clause you speak of, is only a *description* of certain men, to whom the government designs the reward of forty pounds *gratis*.” The admirers of Geneva-logic clap their hands, and cry out, “ Well said ! down with *legality* ! ” but an English jury smiles and cries, “ Down with *absurdity* ! ” See IVth Check. p. 130.

II. OBJ. “ You confound our *title* to, with our *meetness* for heaven, two things which we carefully distinguish. Our *title* to heaven being solely what Christ has done and suffered for his people, has nothing to do with either our holiness or good works ; but, our *meetness* for heaven supposes holiness, if not good works. Therefore, God’s unconverted sinful people, who have in Christ a complete *title* to heaven by right of ‘ *finished salvation*,’ SHALL all be made *meet* for heaven IN THE DAY OF HIS POWER.”

Ans. (1) I understand you, and so does Mr. Fulsome. You insinuate, that, till THE DAY you speak of comes, unconverted finners, and backsliders may indulge themselves like the servant mentioned in the gospel, who said, *My master delayeth his coming, and began to drink with the drunken* ; but alas ! instead of “ a day of power,” he saw a day of vengeance, and his “ *finished salvation* ” (so called) ended in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

(2) Your distinction is contrary to the *scriptures*, which represent ALL impenitent workers of iniquity as having a *full title to hell* according to both law and gospel ; so far are the oracles of God from supposing, that *some* workers of iniquity have a *full title to heaven*, absolutely independent on the obedience of faith.

(3) It

(3) It is contrary to *reason* ; for reason dictates that whosoever has a full TITLE to a *punishment* or to a *reward*, is fully MEET for it. Where is the difference between saying, that a murderer *is fully meet for*, or that he *has a full title to* the gallows ? If a palace richly furnished was bestowed upon the most righteous man in the kingdom, and you were the person ; would it not be absurd to distinguish between your *title to*, and your *meetness for* that RECOMPENCE ? Or, if the king, in consequence of a valuable consideration received from the prince, had promised a coronet to every swift runner in England, next to the prince's interposition and his majesty's promise, would not your running well be at once your *title to*, and *meetness for* that honour ? And is not this the case, with respect to the incorruptible crowns reserved in heaven for those, who *so run that they may obtain* ?

(4) Your distinction draws after it the most horrid consequences : for if a *full title* to heaven may be separated from a *meetness for* the *lowest* place in heaven, it necessarily follows : That Solomon had a *full title* to heaven when he worshipped Ashtaroth ; and the incestuous Corinthian, when he defiled his father's bed ; in flat opposition to the dictates of every man's conscience [if you except Mr. Fulsome and his fraternity.] It follows, that St. Paul told a gross untruth, when he said, *This ye know, that NO idolater, and NO unclean person, hath ANY inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*—In a word, it follows, that believers *sanctified with the blood of the covenant, who draw back to perdition*, [such as the Apostates mentioned, Heb. x. 29.] may have no title to heaven in all their sanctifying faith ; while some impenitent murderers, like David and Manasses, have a perfect title to it in all their crimes and unbelief.

(5) This is not all : Our Lord's mark, *By their fruit ye shall know them*, is absolutely wrong if you are right : for your Distinction abolishes the grand characteristic of the children of God, and those of the devil, which consists in *not committing or committing*

ting iniquity, in doing or not doing righteousness, according to these plain words of St. John, He that committeth sin is of the devil—in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever DOES NOT righteousness, is NOT of God, neither he that loveth not (much less he that murders) *his brother, 1 John iii. 8, 10.*—Thus the Lord's sacred enclosure is broken down, his sheepfold becomes a fold for goats, a dog-kennel, a swine-sty.—Nay, for what you know, all bloody adulterers may be *sheep in wolves cloathing*; while all *those that have escaped the pollution that is in the world*, may only be *wolves in sheep's cloathing*; it mattering not, with regard to the goodness of our title to heaven, whether *filthiness to Belial*, or *holiness to the Lord* be written upon our foreheads. O Sir, how much more dangerous is your scheme, than that of the primitive Babel-builders! They only brought on a confusion of the original language; but your doctrine confounds light and darkness, promises and threatenings, the heirs of heaven and those of hell, the seed of the woman and that of the serpent.

(6) As to your intimation, that holiness is secured by teaching, that God's People SHALL *absolutely be made willing* to forsake their sins, and to become righteous IN THE DAY OF GOD'S POWER, that so they may have a *meetness for*, as well as a *title to* heaven; it drags after it this horrid consequence: The devil's people "in the day of God's power," SHALL *absolutely be made willing* to forsake their righteousness, that they may have a *meetness for*, as well as a *title to* hell: a bitter reverse this of your "*sweet Gospel!*"

To conclude: If by your distinction you only want to insinuate; that Christ is the grand, and properly-meritorious procurer of our salvation, from first to last; and that the works of faith are only a secondary, instrumental, evidencing cause of our *final* salvation, you mean just as I do. But if you give the world to understand, that election to eternal glory is *unconditional*, or, which comes all to one, that

that NO SIN can invalidate our title to heaven ; from the preceding observations it appears, that you deceive the simple, propagate the immoral species of the *Falsomes*, make Christ the minister of sin, and inadvertently poison the church with the rankest antinomianism.

III. OBJ. " You call *the works of Christ* the PRIMARY, and properly-meritorious cause, and *our works of faith* the SECONDARY and instrumental cause of *our eternal* salvation. But, according to your doctrine, *our works* should be called the *first* cause, and *Christ's work* the *second* : for you make the final success of *Christ's work*, to depend upon *our work* ; which is manifestly setting our performances above those of the Redeemer."

ANSWER : (1) When a gardener affirms, that he shall have no crop unless he digs and sets his garden, does he manifestly set his work above that of the God of nature ? And when we say, that " we shall not reap *final* salvation, if we do not work out our salvation," do we exalt ourselves above the God of grace ?

(2) Whether our free-agency turns the scale for life or death, to all eternity Christ shall have the honour of having died to bestow an *initial life* of grace even upon those, who chuse death in the error of their ways, and to have made them gracious and sincere offers of an eternal life of glory. In this sense then, Christ's work cannot be rendered ineffectual ; it being his *absolute* decree, that the word of his grace shall be the favour of life to obedient *free-agents*, and the favour of death to the disobedient. Therefore, if we *will* not have the *eternal* benefit of his redeeming work, we cannot take from him the eternal honour of having shed his blood even for those, who tread it under foot, and who *bring upon themselves swift* DESTRUCTION by *denying the Lord that BOUGHT THEM*.

(3) Christ is not dishonoured by the doctrine, that represents the effect of the greater wheel, as being thus *in part* suspended upon the turning of the less. The light of the sun shines in vain for me, if I shut my

my eyes. *Life* is a far nobler gift than *food*: I can give my starving neighbour bread, but I cannot give him life: Nevertheless, the higher wheel stops, if the inferior is quite at a stand: he must die if he has no nourishment. Thus, by God's appointment, the preservation of all the first born of the Israelites in Egypt depended upon the sprinkling of a Lamb's blood; the life of all them that were bitten by the fiery serpents; was suspended on a look towards the brazen serpent; and that of Rahab and her friends hung, if I may so speak, on a scarlet thread. — Now, if God did not dishonour his wisdom, when he made the life of so many people to depend upon those seemingly insignificant *works*; and if he continues to make the life of all mankind depend upon *breathing*; is it reasonable to say, that he is dishonoured by his own doctrine, which suspends our *eternal* salvation upon the works of faith?

(4) Your objection can be retorted. Most Calvinists grant, that our justification in the day of conversion depends upon *believing*. Thus the Rev. Mr. Madan in his sermon on James ii. 24. p. 18, says, "Tho' the Lord Jesus has merited our justification before God, yet we are not actually justified, till he is received into the heart by faith, and rested on," &c. Therefore, in the day of conversion, that great minister being judge, our *justification* is suspended on the *work* which he calls "*receiving Christ*," or "*resting on him*:" And how much more may our *eternal salvation* be suspended on faith and works, i. e. on *resting upon Christ*, and *working righteousness*!

(5) This is not all: both Mr. Madan and Mr. Hill call faith the *instrumental* CAUSE of our justification, and every body knows that the *effect* is always suspended on the CAUSE: Now, if so great an effect as a sinner's present justification may be suspended upon the *single* CAUSE of faith, why may not a believer's eternal justification be suspended upon the *double* CAUSE of *faith* and its *works*? In a word, why must Mr. Wesley be represented as heterodox for insinuat-

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ing, that *believing* and *working instrumentally* CAUSE our *eternal justification* ; when Mr. Madan wears the badge of orthodoxy, altho' he insinuates, that *believing instrumentally* CAUSES our *justification* ?

If Mr. Madan says, that he allows *faith* to be an instrumental CAUSE, on account of its being the gift of God by which we receive *Christ* ; I answer, that we allow the *work* of faith to be an instrumental cause, because it springs from the spirit of *Christ*, and constitutes our likeness to *Christ*, and our evangelical righteousness ; a righteousness this, which *Christ* came into the world to promote. For *God sending his Son, &c. condemned sin in the flesh, THAT the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit ; i. e. who walk in good works.*—If it is asserted, that there can be but ONE *instrumental cause* of our salvation, that is, *faith* ; I appeal to reason, which dictates that christian faith implies a variety of causes, such as *preaching* *Christ*, and *hearing* him preached : for faith comes by *hearing*, and hearing by the *word* of God. This argument therefore, carries its own answer along with it.

(6) To conclude : Mr. Madan, in the above-quoted sermon, p. 16, says with great truth ; “ *Christ* and “ *faith* are not one and the same thing ; how then “ can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he “ says in one place, *We are justified by Christ* ; and in “ another, we are *justified by faith* ? This can only “ be done by having recourse to the plain distinction, “ which the scriptures afford us, in considering *Christ* “ as the *meritorious cause*, and faith as the *instrumental* “ *cause*, or that by which the *meritorious cause* is ap- “ plied unto us, so that we are benefited thereby.”—Now all our heresy consists in applying Mr. M.'s judicious reasoning to *all* the scriptures, that guard the second gospel axiom, thus : ‘ How can we reconcile ‘ the apostle with himself, when he says in one place, ‘ *We are saved by Christ*, and in other places, *We are* ‘ *saved by faith*, we are *saved by hope* — *Work out your* ‘ *own salvation*—*Confession is made to salvation*, &c. for ‘ *Christ*

* Christ and *faith*, Christ and *hope*, Christ and *works*,
 * Christ and *making confession* are not one and the
 * same thing? This seeming inconsistency in St. Paul's
 * doctrine vanishes by admitting a plain distinction,
 * which the scriptures afford us : that is, 1. By con-
 * sidering *Christ*, from first to last, as the properly-me-
 * ritorious *cause* of our present and eternal salvation :
 * 2. By considering *faith* as the *instrumental* CAUSE of
 * our salvation from the guilt and pollution of sin on
 * earth : And 3. by considering the works of faith,
 * not only as the *evidencing* CAUSE of our justification
 * in the great day, but also as an *instrumental* CAUSE
 * of our *continuing* in the life of faith ; just as eating,
 * drinking, breathing, and such works, that *spring*
 * from natural life, are instrumental causes of our *con-*
 * *tinuing* in natural life.' Thus *faith*, and its *works*,
 are two inferior CAUSES, whereby the properly-meri-
 torious CAUSE is so completely applied to obedient,
 persevering believers, that they are now, and for ever
 shall be benefited by it. As I flatter myself that this
 sixfold answer satisfies the candid reader, I pass on to
 another plausible objection.

IV. OBJ. " Though you assert, that, from first to
 last, the works and sufferings of Christ are the grand,
 and properly-meritorious *cause* of our salvation ; yet,
 according to your scheme, man having a life of glory
 upon his *choice*, and heaven upon *working out* his sal-
 vation, the honour of *free grace* is not secured. For,
 after all, *free will* and human faithfulness, or unfaith-
 fulness, turn the scale for eternal salvation or dam-
 nation."

Ans. (1) In the very nature of things we are free-
 agents, or the wise and righteous God would act in-
 consistently with his wisdom and equity in dispensing
rewards and *punishments*. If, thro' the *saving grace* of
 God which has appeared to all men, we were not again
 endued with an awful power to *chuse* life, and to be
 faithful, it would be as injudicious to *punish* or *recom-*
pense mankind, as to whip a dead horse for not mov-
 ing, damn fire for burning, or grant water an eternal

reward for its fluidity. (2) Were I ashamed of my moral free-agency, I should be ashamed of the noble power that distinguishes me from the brute creation. — I should be ashamed of the old testament, and of Moses, who says : *Behold, I call heaven and earth to record, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore CHUSE life.* — I should be ashamed of the new testament, and of Christ, who complains, *You WILL NOT come unto me that you might have life,* i. e. You will not use the power, which my preventing grace has given you, that you might live here a life of faith and holiness, and be hereafter rewarded with a life of happiness and glory. — In a word, I should give up the second gospel-axiom, and tacitly reproach my Maker, who says ; *Why will ye die, O house of Israel ? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth ; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

(3) To convince you, that *Free-agency*, and a right use of it, are by no means inconsistent with divine grace and genuine humility, I ask, Did not God endue our first parents with *free will* ? Are not even some rigid Calvinists ashamed to deny it ? If *free will* in man is a power *dishonourable* to God, did not our wise Creator mistake when he pronounced man *very good*, at the very time, man was a *free-willer* ? For, how could man be *very good*, if he had within him a power that *necessarily* militates against the honour of God, as the Calvinists insinuate *free-will* does ?

(4) I go one step farther and ask, Did God ever endue *one child of Adam* with power to avoid one sin ? — If you say, No : you contradict the scriptures, your own conscience, and the consciences of all mankind ; you fix the blot of folly on all the judges, who have *judicially* punished malefactors with death ; and, when you insinuate, that the Lawgiver of the universe will send all workers of iniquity personally into hell, for *not doing what is lawful and right to save their souls alive* ; or for not avoiding sin, when he never gave them the least power personally so to do ; you pour almost as much contempt upon his perfections, as if
you

you hinted, that he will one day raise all creeping insects, to judge them *according to their steps*, and to cast into a place of torment as many as did not move as swiftly as a race horse.

If you answer in the affirmative, and grant, that God has graciously endued *one* child of Adam with power to avoid *one* sin, so far you hold *free will* as well as Moses and Jesus Christ. Now if God has bestowed *free will* upon *one* child of Adam with respect to the avoiding of *one* sin; why not upon *two*, with respect to the avoiding of *two* sins? Why not upon *all*, with respect to the avoiding of *all* the sins, that are incompatible with the obedience of faith?

(5) Again, as it would be *absurd* to say, that God gave a power to avoid *one* sin, only to *one* child of Adam: so it would be *impious* to suppose, God gave him this power, that, in case he faithfully used it, he should *necessarily* boast of it. Pharisaic boasting is then by no means the *necessary* consequence of our moral liberty, or of a proper use of our *free-will*. Thus it appears, that your specious objection is founded upon an heap of paradoxes; and that to embrace *free will* lest we should not make enough of *free grace*, and to jump into *fatalism* lest we would be proud of our *free-will*, is not less absurd than to prostrate before a traitor lest we should not honour the king, and to run to an house of ill fame lest we should be proud of our chastity.

(6) Our doctrine secures the honour of *free grace* as well as calvinism. You will be convinced of it, if you consider the following articles of our creed with respect to *free grace*. (1) Before the fall, the *free grace* of our Creator gave us in Adam holiness, happiness, and a power to continue in both. — (2) Since the fall, the *free grace* of our Redeemer indulges us with a reprieve, an accepted time, a day of visitation and salvation; in a word, with a better covenant, and a *free gift*, that is come upon all men unto [initial] *justification of life*, Rom. v. 18. — (3) That nothing may be wanting on God's part, the *free grace* of our Sanctifier

tifier excites us to make a proper use of the free gift, part of which is *moral liberty*. — (4) Thus, even our *free-will* to good is all of creating, redeeming, and sanctifying grace : therefore, with regard to that glorious power, as well as to every other talent, we humbly ask with St. Paul, *What hast thou, that thou hast not received ?* — (5) This is not all : We are commanded to *account the long-suffering of God* [a degree of] SALVATION ; and so it is : for without forcing, or necessarily inclining our will, God's *providential free grace* disposes a thousand circumstances in such a manner, as to second the calls of the everlasting gospel. The gracious Preserver of men works daily a thousand wonders to keep us out of the grave, and out of hell : A thousand wheels have turned ten thousand times in and out of the church, to bring us the purest streams of gospel truth. Countless breathings of the *Spirit of grace* add virtue to those streams ; *free grace* therefore not only *prevents*, but also in numberless ways accompanies, follows, directs, encourages, and assists us in all the work of our salvation.

And yet, while God thus *works in us*, as the God of all grace, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure* ; that is, while he thus gives us the *faculty to will*, and the *power to do* ; and while he secretly by his spirit, and publicly by his ministers and providences, excites us to make a proper use of that *faculty and power* ; yet, as the God of wisdom, holiness, and justice, he leaves the *act* to our choice ; thus treating us as rational creatures, whom he intends wisely to *reward* or justly to *punish* ACCORDING TO THEIR works, and not according to *his own*.

Hence it appears, that we go every step of the way with our Calvinist brethren, while they exalt Christ and free grace in a rational and scriptural manner ; and that we refuse to follow them only when they set Christ at nought as a prophet, a lawgiver, a judge, and a king ; under pretence of extolling him as a priest ; or when they put *wanton free-grace*, and unrelenting *free-wrath*, in the place of the *genuine free-grace* testified of in the scriptures.

V. Obj. "One more difficulty remains : If I freely obey the gospel and am *saved* ; and if my neighbour freely *disobeys* it, and is *damm'd*, what makes me to differ from him ? Is it not my free obedience of faith ?"

Ans. Undoubtedly : And his *free* disobedience makes *him* differ from *you* : or it would be very absurd JUDICIALLY to acquit and reward *you* rather than *him*, according to YOUR works. And it would be strange duplicity to condemn and punish *him* rather than *you* in a day of judgment, after the most solemn protestations, that equity and impartiality shall dictate the Judge's sentence.

As to the difficulty arising from St. Paul's question, 1 Cor. iv. 7, *Who maketh thee to differ ?* to what I have said about it in the preceding sermon, p. 81, I add : (1) According to the covenant of works *all fall short of the glory of God* : and when any one asks, with respect to the law of innocence, *Who makes thee to differ ?* the proper answer is, "*There is no difference : every mouth must be stopped : all the world is guilty before God — Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord.*" — But, according to the covenant of grace, he that *freely* believes and obeys in the strength of *free grace*, undoubtedly makes himself to differ from him, that by obstinate disobedience *does despite to the spirit of grace*. If this point is given up, the Diana and the Apollo or rather the Apollyon of the Antinomians [I mean wanton Free-grace and merciless Free-wrath] are set up for ever. However,

(2) If the question, *Who maketh thee to differ ?* is asked with respect to the NUMBER of our talents, the proper answer is, "God's distinguishing grace alone maketh us to differ." And that this is the sense, which the apostle had in view, is evident from the context. He had before reprov'd the Corinthians for *saying every one, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, &c.* and now he adds, *These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, that ye might learn in us not to think [of gifted, popular men, or of yourselves] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up*

up for one against another ; for who maketh thee to differ ? Why is thy person graceful ? and why art thou naturally an eloquent man like Apolles, whilst thy brother's speech is rude, and his bodily presence weak and contemptible like mine ? But,

(3) If you ask, *Who maketh thee to differ ?* with respect to the improvement or non-improvement of our gifts and graces : if you enquire, Whether God *necessitates* some to disbelieve, that they may *necessarily* sin and be damned ; while he *necessitates* others to believe, that they may *necessarily* work righteousness and be saved ; I utterly deny the last question, and in this sense St. Paul answers his own misapplied question thus. *Be not deceived : What a man* (not what God) *soweth, that shall he also reap, perdition* if he soweth to the flesh, and *eternal life* if he soweth to the spirit. Nor am I either afraid or ashamed to second him by saying upon the walls of Jerusalem, that in the last-mentioned sense, *We make ourselves to differ*. And scripture, reason, conscience, the divine perfections, and the trump of God, which will soon summon us to judgment, testify, that this reply stands as firm as one half of the bible, and the second gospel-axiom, on which it is immoveably founded.

Nay, there is not a promise or a threatening in the bible, that is not a proof of our *Lawgiver's* want of wisdom, or of our *Judge's* want of equity, if we are not graciously endued with a capacity to make ourselves differ from the obstinate violators of the law, and despisers of the gospel—that is, if we are not *free* agents. There is not an exhortation, a warning, or an entreaty in the sacred pages, that is not a demonstration of the pen-man's *jolly*, or of the *freedom* of our will. In a word, there is not a sinner justly *punished* in hell, or a believer wisely *rewarded* in heaven, that does not indirectly say to all the world of rationals : ‘ Though the God of grace *draws* thee to obedience ; yet it is with *the bands of a man*. For, after all, he *leaves thee in the hand of thy counsel, to keep the commandments, and perform acceptable obedience* 17.

‘ THOU

' THOU WILT. *Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh, shall be given him.*' Eccles. xv. 14, &c.

BUT, altho' your obedience of faith makes you to differ from your condemned neighbour, you have no reason to reject the *first* gospel-axiom, and to indulge a *boasting* † contrary to faith and free grace : for your christian *Faith*, which is the root of your obedience, is peculiarly the GIFT of God ; whether you consider it as to its precious SEED (*the word nigh* :) as to its glorious OBJECT (*Christ and the truth* :) as to the MEANS, by which that object is revealed (*such as preaching and hearing* :) as to the OPPORTUNITIES and FACULTIES of using those means (*such as life, reason, &c.*) or as to the SPIRIT OF GRACE, whose assistance in this case is so important, that he is called the *spirit of faith*. — And yet that spirit does not act irresistibly ; all believers *unnecessarily* and *freely* yielding to it, and all unbelievers *unnecessarily* and *freely* resisting it : So far only does the matter turn upon
free

† There is a twofold *glorying* ; the one pharisaic and contrary to faith ; of this St. Paul speaks, where he says, *BOASTING is excluded, &c. By the law of faith*, Rom. iii. 27. The other, evangelical and agreeable to faith ; since it is a believer's holy triumph in God, resulting from the testimony of a good conscience. Concerning it the apostle says, *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing [BOASTING] in himself alone, and not in another*, Gal. vi. 4. [The word in the original is *Kauchesis* in one passage, and *Kauchema* in the other.] These seemingly contrary doctrines are highly consistent ; their opposition answering to that of the gospel-axioms. The first axiom allows of no glorying but in Christ, who has alone fulfilled the *law of works*, or the terms of the *first* covenant : But the second axiom allows obedient believers an humble *Kauchema*, upon their personally fulfilling the *law of faith*, or the gracious terms of the *second* covenant. 2 Cor. i. 12. This *Kauchema* answers to what St. Paul calls the *witness of our own spirit*, or the *testimony of a good conscience* ; which, next to the witness of the word and spirit concerning God's mercy and Christ's blood, is the ground of a christian's confidence. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, &c. because we keep his commandments*, 1 John, iii. 21, 22. And yet, astonishing ! this blessed *Kauchema*, so strongly recommended by St. Paul and St. John, who, one would think, knew something of the gospel, is now represented by some modern evangelists, as the quintessence of pharisaism !

free will. Thus it appears, that altho' the *act* of faith is *ours*, we are so much indebted to *free grace* for it, that believers can no more boast of being their own *saviours*, because they daily *believe* and *work* in order to their final salvation ; than they can boast of being their own *preservers*, because they daily *breathe* and *eat* in order to their continued preservation.

On the other hand, altho' your condemned neighbour's disobedience makes him differ from you, he has no reason to reject the *second* gospel-axiom, and to exculpate himself by charging heaven with capricious partiality and horrid free-wrath ; because God, whose mercy is over all his works, and who is no respecter of persons, graciously bestowed a talent of free grace upon him as well as upon you, according to one or another of the divine dispensations : For the royal master, mentioned in the gospel, gave a pound to the servant that buried it, as well as to him that gained ten pounds by occupying till his lord came.

“ But, upon that footing, what becomes of **DIS-
TINGUISHING GRACE ?**” If by *distinguishing grace* you mean *calvinistic partiality*, I answer, It must undoubtedly sink together with its inseparable partner, *unconditional reprobation*, into the pit of error, whence they ascended to fill the church with contentions, and the world with infidels. But if you mean **SCRIPTURAL, distinguishing grace**, that is, the *manifold wisdom of God*, which makes him proceed gradually, and admit a pleasing variety in the works of grace, as well as in the productions of nature — if you mean his good pleasure to give the heathens one talent, the jews two, the papists three, the protestants four ; or if you mean the different methods, which he uses to call sinners to repentance, such as his familiar expostulation with Cain — his wonderful warning of Lot's sons-in-law — His rousing king Saul by the voice of Samuel, and Saul of Tarsus by the voice of Christ ; [Samuel and Christ coming, or seeming to come from the invisible world for that awful purpose] — His audibly inviting Judas and the rich ruler to follow him, promising the latter

latter heavenly treasure, if he would give his earthly possessions to the poor — His shocking by preternatural earthquakes the consciences of the Philippian jailor, and the two malefactors that suffered with him — His awakening Ananias, Sapphira, and thousands more by the wonders of the day of Pentecost, when Lydia and others were called only in the common way — If you mean this, by **DISTINGUISHING** grace, we are agreed: for, grace displayed in as distinguishing a manner as it was towards Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, greatly illustrates our Lord's doctrine: "Of him to whom little is given, little shall be required; but much shall be required of them, that have received much;" the equality of God's ways not consisting in giving to all men a like number of talents, any more than making them all archangels; but in treating them all equally, according to the various editions of the everlasting gospel, or law of liberty; and according to the good or bad uses they have made of their talents, whether they had few or many.

To return to your grand objection: You suppose (and this is probably the ground of your mistake) that when a deliverance, or a divine favour turns upon some thing, which we may do, or leave undone at our option, God is necessarily robbed of his glory. But a few queries will easily convince you of your mistake. When God had been merciful to Lot and his family, not looking back made all the difference between him and his wife; but does it follow, that he claimed the honour of his narrow escape? — Looking at the brazen type of Christ made some Israelites differ from others, that died of the bite of the fiery serpents; but is it a sufficient reason to conclude, that the healed men had not sense to distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* causes, and that they ascribed to their looks the glory due to God, for graciously contriving the means of their cure? — One of your neighbours has hanged, and another has poisoned himself; so that not hanging yourself, and taking wholesome food has so far made the difference between you and them: but
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can you reasonably infer, that you do not live by divine bounty, and that I rob the Preserver of men of his glory, when I affirm, that you shall surely die if you do not eat, or if you take poison ?

Permit me to make you sensible of your mistake by one more illustration. An anti-Calvinist, who observes that God has suspended many of his blessings upon industry, diligently plows, sows, and weeds his field. A fatalist over the way, left free grace should not have all the glory of his crop, does not turn † one clod, and expects seed to drop from the clouds into furrows made by an invisible plow on a certain day, which he calls "a day of God's power." When harvest comes, the one has a crop of wheat, and the other a crop of weeds. Now, altho' industry alone has made the difference between the two fields ; who is most likely to give God the glory of a crop, the solifidian farmer who reaps thistles ? or the laborious husbandman, who has joined works to his faith in divine providence, and joyfully brings his sheaves home ; saying as St. Paul, By divine bounty I have planted and Apellos has weeded, but God has given the encrease which is all in all ?

† This is not spoken of *pious* Calvinists, for some of them are remarkably diligent in good works. They are *Solifidians* by halves — in principle, but not in practice. Their works outshine their errors. I lay nothing to their charge but inattention, prejudice, and glaring inconsistency. I compare them to diligent, good-natured druggists, who among many excellent remedies sell sometimes arsenic. They would not for the world take it themselves, or poison their neighbours ; but yet they freely retail it, and in so doing they are inadvertently the cause of much mischief. Mr. Fulsome, for example, could say which of our gospel ministers taught him, that good works are *dung*, and have nothing to do with eternal salvation. He could inform us, who lulled him asleep in his sins with the Syren-songs of "*unconditional election*," and "*finished salvation* in the full extent of the word ;" that is, he could let us know who gave him his killing dose : and numbers of deists could tell us, that a bare taste or smell of calvinism has made them loath the genuine doctrines of grace, just as tasting or smelling a *tainted* partridge has for ever turned some people's stomachs against partridge.

THIRD

THIRD PART.

Flattering myself, that the preceding answers have removed the reader's prejudices, or confirmed him in his attachment to genuine *free-grace*, which stands at an equal distance from *wantonness* and *free wrath*; I shall conclude this Essay by some reflections upon the pride, or prejudices of those who scruple working with an eye to the rewards, that God offers to promote the obedience of faith.

“ If heaven [say such mistaken persons] is the enjoyment of God in glory, is the reward of obedience; and if you work with an eye to that reward, you act from *self*, the *basest* of all motives. Love, and not self-interest, sets *us*, true believers, upon action: We work from *gratitude*, † and not for profit; from *life*, † and not for life. To do good with an eye to a reward, tho' that reward should be a crown of life, is to act as a mercenary wretch, and not as a dutious child, or a faithful servant.”

This specious error, zealously propagated by Molinos, Lady Guion, and her illustrious convert, archbishop Fenelon [tho' afterwards renounced by him] put a stop to a great revival of the power of godliness abroad in the last century; and it has already struck a fatal blow at the late revival in these kingdoms. I reverence and love many that contend for this sentiment; but, my regard for truth overbalancing my

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respect

† The reader is desired to observe, that we recommend working from *life* and *gratitude* as well as our opponents. Life and thankfulness are two important springs of action, which we use as well as they. We maintain, that even those, who *have a name to live and are DEAD in trespasses and sins*, cannot be saved without *strengthening the things that remain and are READY TO DIE*; and that *thankfulness* for being out of hell, and for having a day of salvation thro' Christ, should be strongly recommended to the chief of sinners. But thankfulness and life are not *all* the springs necessary, in our imperfect state, to move *all* the wheels of obedience; and we dare no more exclude the *other* springs, because we have these two; than we dare cut off three of our fingers, because we have a little finger and a thumb.

respect for them, I think it my duty to oppose their mistake, as a pernicious refinement of Satan transformed into an angel of light : I therefore attack it by the following arguments.

(1) This doctrine makes us *wise above what is written*. We read, that hunger, and want of bread, brought back the prodigal son. His father knew it, but instead of treating him as an hired servant, he entertained him as a beloved child,

(2) It sets aside at a stroke a considerable part of the bible, which consists in *threatenings* to deter evil-workers, and in *promises* to encourage obedient believers : For, if it is *base* to obey in order to obtain a *promised* reward, it is *baser* still to do it in order to avoid a *threatened* punishment. Thus the precious *grace of faith*, so far as it is exercised about divine *promises* and *threatenings*, is indirectly made void.

(3) It decries *godly fear*, a grand spring of action, and preservative of holiness in all free agents, that are in a state of probation ; and by this means it indirectly charges God with want of wisdom, for putting that spring in the breast of innocent man in paradise, and for perpetually working upon it in his word and by his *Spirit*, whom St. Paul calls *the Spirit of bondage unto FEAR* ; because he helps us to *believe* the threatenings denounced against the workers of iniquity, and to *fear* lest ruin shall overtake us, if we continue in our sins.

If ever there was a visible church without spot and wrinkle, it was when *the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul*. The worldly-mindedness of Ananias and Sapphira was the first blemish of the Christian, as Achan's covetousness had been of the Jewish Church on this side Jordan. God made an example of them as he had done of Achan, and St. Luke observes, that upon it, *GREAT FEAR came upon ALL THE CHURCH* ; even such fear as kept them from *falling after the same example of unbelief*. Now were all the primitive christians mean-spirited people, because they were filled with *great fear* of being

being *punished* as the first backsliders if they apostatized? Is it a reproach to righteous Noah, that *Being moved with FEAR he prepared an ark for the SAVING of his house?* And did our Lord legalize the gospel, when he began to say to his disciples first of all, &c. *I say unto you, MY FRIENDS, be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c. but FEAR him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto YOU, fear him?* — Does this mean: Be mercenary: Yea, I say unto you, be mercenary?

(4) *Hope* has a particular, necessary reference to *promises*, and *good things* to come. Excellent things are spoken of that grace: If St. Paul says, *Ye are saved thro' FAITH*, he says also, *We are saved by HOPE*. Hence St. Peter observes, that “*exceeding great PROMISES are given unto us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature*: And St. John declares, *Every man, that has this HOPE in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure*. Now *hope* never stirs, but in order to obtain *good things* in view: a motive this, which our gospel-refiners represent as illiberal and base. Their scheme therefore, directly tends to ridicule and suppress the capital, christian grace, which *Faith* guards on the left hand, and *Charity* on the right.

(5) Their error springs from a false conclusion. Because it is mean to relieve a beggar with an eye to a reward from *him*, they infer, that it is mean to do a good work with an eye to a reward from God; not considering that a beggar *promises* nothing, and *can* give nothing valuable; whereas the Parent of good *promises*, and *can* give *eternal life* to them that obey him: Their inference is then just as absurd as the following argument: “I ought not to set my heart upon an
“ earthly, inferior, transitory good; therefore I must
“ not set it upon the chief, heavenly, permanent
“ good.—It is foolish to shoot at a wrong mark, there-
“ fore I must not shoot at the right; I must not aim
“ at the very mark, which God himself has set up
“ for me ultimately to level all my actions at, next

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“ to

“ to his own glory, viz. the enjoyment of himself,
 “ the light of his countenance, the smiles of his open
 “ face, which make the heaven of heavens.”

(6) God says to Abraham, and in him to all believers, *I am thy exceeding great REWARD*: Hence it follows, that the higher we rise in holiness and obedience, the nearer we shall be admitted to the eternal throne; and the fuller enjoyment we shall have of our God and Saviour, our reward and Rewarder. Therefore, to overlook divine rewards, is to overlook God himself, who is *our great REWARD*; and to slight *the life to come, of which godliness has the PROMISE*.

(7) The error I oppose can be put in a still stronger light. Not to strive to obtain our *great reward* in full, amounts to saying: “ Lord thou art beneath my
 “ aim and pursuit: I can do without thee, or with-
 “ out *so much* of thee. I will not bestir myself, and
 “ do one thing to obtain either the fruition, or a ful-
 “ ler enjoyment of thy adorable self.” — An illustration or two, short as they fall of the thing illustrated, may help us to see the great impropriety of such a conduct. If the king offered to give all officers, who would distinguish themselves in the field, his hand to kiss, and a commission in the guards, that he might have them near his person; would not military gentlemen defeat the intention of this gracious offer, and betray a peculiar degree of indifference for his Majesty, if in the day of battle they would not strike one blow the more, on account of the royal promise?

Again: When David asked: What shall be done to him that killeth the giant? and when he was informed, that Saul would give him his daughter in marriage; would the young shepherd have shewed his regard for the princess, or respect for the monarch, if he had said: “ I am above minding rewards: what I do, I do freely: I scorn acting from so base a motive as a desire to secure the hand of the princess, and the honour of being the king’s son-in-law?” Could any thing have been ruder, and more haughty than such a speech? And yet, O see what evangelical refine-
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ments have done for us ! We, who are infinitely less before God than David was before king Saul — we, worms of a day, are so blinded by prejudice, as to think it beneath us to mind the offers of the King of kings, or to strive for the rewards of the Lord of lords !

Wo to him that striveth in generosity with his Maker ! Let the potsherd strive thus with the potsherds of the earth : but let not the clay say to him that fashioneth it, ' What doest thou when thou stirrest me up to good works by the promise of thy rewards ? Surely, Lord, thou forgettest, that the nobleness of my mind, and my doctrine of finished salvation, make me above running for a reward, tho' it should be a life of glory, and Thyself. Whatever I do at thy command, I am determined not to demean myself ; I will do it as Araunah, like a king. ' What depths of antinomian pride may be hid under the covering of our voluntary humility !

(8) The Calvinists of the last century, in their lucid intervals, saw the absolute necessity of working for heaven and heavenly rewards. We have a good, practical discourse of J. Bunyan upon these words, *So run that you may obtain*. The burden of it is, “ *If you will have heaven you must run for it.* ” Whence he calls his sermon, “ *The heavenly footman.* ” — And Matthew Mead, † a staunch Calvinist, in his treatise on *The*

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good

† As a proof of his being sound in the doctrines of Calvinistic grace and confusion, I present the reader with the following passage taken from the same book printed in London 1683—p. 307. “ A believer is under the law for *conduct*, but not for *judgment*, &c. It is the guide of his path, but not the judge of his state. The believer is bound to obey it, but not to stand or fall by it ” [That is, in plain english, He should obey, but his disobedience will never bring him under condemnation, and hinder him to stand in judgment] “ It is a rule of life, &c. and therefore it obliges believers as much as others, tho' upon other motives, &c. For they are not to expect life or favour from it, nor fear the death and rigour that comes by it. The law has no power to *justify* a believer, or *condemn* him, and therefore can be no rule to *try* his state by.” — In flat opposition

ged of early obedience, p. 429, says with great truth :
 ‘ Maintain an holy, filial fear of God : This is an excellent preservative against apostacy, *By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*, says Solomon ; and he tells you, *The fear of the Lord is the fountain of LIFE, whereby men depart from the snares of DEATH* ; and backsliding from Christ is one of the great snares of death. Think much of the day of recompense, and of the glorious reward of perseverance in that day : *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*. It is not those that begin well, but those who end well, that receive the crown. It is not mercenary service to quicken ourselves to obedience by the hope of a recompence. *Omnis amor mercedis non est mercenarius*, &c. David said, *I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments*. He encouraged himself to duty by the hope of glory, &c. Hope of that glorious recompence is of great service to quicken us to perseverance. And to the same end does the apostle urge it : *Be unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*’

(9) When voluntary humility has made us wise above what is written by the apostles, and by our forefathers, it will make us look down with contempt from the top of our fancied orthodoxy upon the motives, by which the prophets took up their cross, to serve God and their generation. When St. Paul enumerates the works of Moses, he traces them back to their noble principle, *faith working by a well-ordered self-love* [a love this, which is inseparable from the love of God and man ; the law of liberty binding us

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tion to the general tenor of the scriptures, thus summed up by St. John, *In this, namely committing, or not committing sin, the children of God ARE MANIFEST, and the children of the Devil*. What this author says is true, if it is understood of the *Adamic law of innocence* ; but if it is extended to St. Paul’s *law of Christ*, and to St. James’s *law of liberty*, it is one of the dangerous tenets that support the chair of the antinomian man of sin.

to love our neighbour as ourselves, and God above ourselves] He chose, says the apostle, to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, &c. But why? Because he was above looking at the prize? Just the reverse: because he had respect to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 26.

(10) In the next chapter, the apostle bids us take Christ himself for our pattern in the very thing, which our gospel-refiners call mercenary and base: Looking to Jesus, says he, who, FOR THE JOY that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God: the noble reward this, with which his mediatorial obedience was crowned, as appears from these words, He became OBEDIENT unto death; WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him. If the scheme of those who refine the ancient gospel appears to me in a peculiarly-unfavourable light, it is when I see them impose upon the injudicious admirers of unscriptural humility, and make the simple believe, that they do God service when they indirectly represent Christ's obedience unto death as imperfect, and him as mercenary, actuated by a motive unworthy of a child of God. He says, Every one that is PERFECT, shall be as his master: but we [such is our consistency!] loudly decry perfection, and yet pretend to an higher degree of it than our Lord and Master: For he was not above enduring the cross FOR THE JOY of sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God: but we are so exquisitely perfect, that we will work gratis. It is mercenary, it is beneath us to work for glory!

(11) I fear, this contempt is by some indirectly poured upon the Lord of glory, to extol the spurious free-grace who is sister to free-wrath; and to persuade the simple, that "Works have nothing to do with our final justification and eternal salvation before God:" a dogma this, which is as contrary to reason, as it is to scripture and morality; it being a monstrous imposition upon the credulity of protestants, to assert, that works, which God himself will REWARD with final

final justification and eternal salvation, have nothing to do with that justification and that salvation before Him : Just as if the thing rewarded had nothing to do with its reward before the Rewarder !

(12) The most rigid Calvinists allow, that St. Paul is truly evangelical : but, which of the sacred writers ever spoke greater things of the rewardableness of works than he ? What can be plainer, what stronger than these words, which I must quote till they are minded : *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, &c. knowing [i. e. considering] that of the Lord ye shall receive the REWARD of the inheritance. But he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done : for there is no respect of persons, Col. iii. 23, &c. Again : Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap : for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap perdition ; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap everlasting life. Gal. vi. 7, 8.*

From those scriptures it is evident, that *doing* good or bad works is like *sowing* good or bad seed ; and that going to heaven or to hell, is like gathering what we have sown. Now, as it is the MADNESS of *unbelievers* to sow wickedness, and to expect a crop of happiness and glory ; so it is the WISDOM of *believers* to sow righteousness, expecting to *reap in due time if they faint not*. Nor do we act reasonably, if we do not *sow* more or less with an eye to *reaping* : for if *reaping* is quite out of the question with protestants, they may as wisely sow chaff on a fallow, as corn in a plowed field. Hence I conclude, that a believer may obey, and that, if he is *judicious*, he *will* obey looking both to Jesus and to the rewards of obedience ; and that the more he can fix the eye of his faith upon *his exceeding great reward*, and his *great recompence of reward*, the more he will abound in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.

(13) St. Paul's *conduct* with respect to rewards, was perfectly consistent with his *doctrine*. I have already observed, he wrote to the Corinthians, that he so *ran* and so *fought*, as to obtain an *incorruptible crown* ; and
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it is well known, that in the Olympic games, to which he alludes, all *ran* or *fought* with an eye to a prize, a reward, or a crown. But in his epistle to the Philippians, he goes still farther; for he represents his running for a crown of life, his *pressing* after rewards of grace and glory, as the whole of his business. His words are remarkable: *This ONE thing I DO: forgetting those things which are behind, and REACHING FORTH unto those things which are before, I PRESS towards the mark, FOR THE PRIZE of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* And when he had just run his race out, he wrote to Timothy, *I have finished my course: henceforth there is laid up for me, as for a conqueror, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous JUDGE shall give me at that day* — the great day of retribution. As for St. John, when he was perfected in love, we find him as “mercenary” as St. Paul: for he writes to the elect Lady, and to her believing children, *Look to yourselves, that we LOSE NOT those things which WE HAVE WROUGHT, but that we receive a FULL REWARD.*

(14) When I read such Scriptures, I wonder at those, who are so wrapt up in the pernicious notion, that we ought not to work † for a life of glory; as to over-look

† Truth is so great that it sometimes prevails over those, that are prejudiced against it. I have observed that Dr. Crisp himself, in an happy moment, bore a most noble testimony to undefiled religion. Take another instance of it. In the volume of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield's sermons taken in short hand, and published by Gurney, p. 119, that great preacher says, “*First* we must work FOR spiritual life, “*afterwards* FROM it.” — And p. 153, 154, he declares: “There are numbers of poor, that are ready to perish; and if you drop something to them in love, God will take care to *repay* you when “you come to judgment.” I find but one fault with this doctrine. The first of those propositions does not guard *free grace* so well as Mr. Wesley's minutes do. We should always intimate, that there is no working *for* a life of glory, or *for* a *more abundant* life of grace, but *from* an initial life of grace, *freely* given us in Christ BEFORE any working of our own. This I mention, not to prejudice the reader against Mr. Whitefield, but to show, that I am not so prejudiced in favour of *works*, as not to see when even a Whitefield, in an unguarded expression, leans towards them to the disparagement of *free grace*.

look even the *crown of life*, with which God will reward those who are *faithful unto death*. And I am astonished at the remains of my own unbelief, which prevent my being always ravished with admiration at the thought of the rewards offered to fire my soul into seraphic obedience. An idle country-fellow, who runs at the wakes for a wretched prize, labours harder in his sportive race than, I fear, I do yet in some of my prayers and sermons. A sportsman, for the pitiful honour of coming in at the death of a fox, toils more than most professors do in the pursuit of their corruptions. How ought confusion to cover our faces! Let those that refine the gospel, glory in their shame: let each of them say, "I thank thee, O God, that I am
 " not like a Papist, or like that Arminian, who looks
 " at the rewards which thou hast promised: I deny
 " myself, and take up my cross, without thinking of
 " the joy and rewards set before me," &c. For my part, I desire to humble myself before God, for having so long overlooked the *exceeding great reward*, and the *crown of life*, promised to them that obey him: and my thoughts shall be expressed in such words as these:

Gracious Lord, if he that receiveth a prophet in the
 name of a prophet, shall have a prophet's reward: if
 our light affliction, when it is patiently endured, work-
 eth for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of
 glory: if thou hast said, Do good and lend, hoping for
 nothing again [from man,] and your reward shall be
 great, and ye shall be the children of the highest: if
 thou animatest those, who are persecuted for right-
 eousness sake, by this promissory exhortation, Re-
 joice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward
 in heaven: Nay, if a cup of cold water only, given in
 thy name, shall in NO WISE lose its reward; and if the
 least of thy rewards is a smile of approbation; let
 me be ready to go round the world, shouldst thou
 call me to it, that I may obtain such a recompence.

Since thou hast so closely connected holiness and
 happiness, my duty and thy favours; let no man be-
 guile me of my reward in a voluntary humility; nor
 suffer

' suffer me to be carried about with every wind of
 ' doctrine by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness,
 ' whereby they lie in wait to deceive. And whatsoever
 ' my hand findeth to do, help me to do it with all my
 ' might; not only lest I lose my reward, but also lest I
 ' have not a full reward; lest I lose a beam of the
 ' light of thy countenance, or a degree of that pecu-
 ' liar likeness and nearness to thee, with which thou
 ' wilt recompense those, who excel in virtue. So shall
 ' I equally avoid the delusion of the *pharisees*, who
 ' expect heaven thro' their *faithless* works; and the
 ' error of the *antinomians*, who hope to enter into thy
 ' glory without the passport of the *works of faith*.'

' And now, Lord, if thy servant has found favour
 ' in thy sight, permit him to urge another request :
 ' so far as thy wisdom, and the laws, by which thy
 ' free grace works upon free agents, will permit; in-
 ' cline the minds of papists and protestants to receive
 ' the truth as it is in Jesus. Let not especially this
 ' plain testimony borne to the many great *promises*
 ' which thou hast made, and to the astonishing RE-
 ' WARDS which thou offerest them, that *work* righte-
 ' ousness, be rejected by my Calvinist brethren. Keep
 ' them from fighting against thy goodness, and des-
 ' pising their own mercies, under pretence of fighting
 ' against "*Arminian errors*," and despising "*Pelagian*
 ' *Checks to the gospel*." And make them sensible, that
 ' it is absurd, to decry in word the Pope's pretensions
 ' to *infallibility*, if by an obstinate refusal to "*review*
 ' the whole affair," and to weigh their supposed or-
 ' thodoxy in the balances of reason and revelation,
 ' they *in fact* pretend to be *infallible* themselves; and
 ' thus, instead of one catholic pontiff, set up ten
 ' thousand protestant popes.'

' Thou knowest, Lord, that many of them love
 ' thee; and that, tho' they disgrace thy gospel by
 ' their doctrinal peculiarities, they adorn it by their
 ' godly conversation, O endue them with more love
 ' to their remonstrant brethren! Give them and me
 ' that *charity* which *behaveth not itself unseemly*, which
 ' rejoiceth

' rejoiceth not in a favourite error, but rejoiceth in the
 ' truth, even when it is advanced by our opponents.
 ' Thou seest, that if they decry true holiness and good
 ' works as "dung and dross," it is chiefly for fear *thy*
 ' *glory* should be obscured by *our obedience*. Error
 ' transformed into an angel of light has deceived
 ' them and they think to do thee service by propa-
 ' gating the deception. O gracious God, pardon
 ' them this wrong. They *do it ignorantly in unbelief*;
 ' therefore seal not up their mistake with the seal of
 ' thy wrath: Let them yet *know the truth*, and let the
 ' truth enlarge their hearts, and *make them free* from
 ' the notion, that thou art not *loving to every man* dur-
 ' ing *the day of salvation*; and that there is neither
 ' mercy nor Saviour for most of their neighbours,
 ' even during *the accepted time*.'

' Above all, Lord, if they cannot defend their mis-
 ' takes, either by argument or by scripture quoted
 ' according to the context, and the obvious tenour of
 ' thy sacred oracles; give them more *wisdom*, than
 ' to expose any longer the protestant religion, which
 ' they think to defend; and more *piety*, than to make
 ' the men of the world abhor thy gospel, and blas-
 ' pheme thy name, as free-thinkers are daily tempt-
 ' ed to do, when they see, that those, who pretend
 ' to "exalt thee" most, are of all protestants the most
 ' ready to disarm thy gospel of its sanctions; to turn
 ' thy judicial sentences into frivolous descriptions;
 ' to overlook the dictates of reason, and good nature;
 ' and to make the press groan under illogical asser-
 ' tions, and personal abuse!'

' Let thy servant speak once more: Thou knowest,
 ' O Lord, that, thy power being my helper, I would
 ' chuse to die rather than wilfully to depreciate that
 ' grace, that *free* grace of thine, which has so long
 ' kept me out of hell, and daily gives me sweet fore-
 ' tastes of heaven. And now, Lord, let not readers
 ' of a pharisaic turn, mistake what I have advanced
 ' in honour of the *works of faith*, and by that means
 ' build themselves up in their self-righteous delusion,
 ' and

‘ and destructive contempt of thy merits : Help them
 ‘ to consider, that if our *works* are *rewardable*, it is
 ‘ because thy *free grace* makes them so ; thy Father
 ‘ having mercifully accepted our persons for thy sake,
 ‘ thy holy spirit having gently helped our infirmities,
 ‘ thy precious blood having fully atoned for our sins
 ‘ and imperfections, thy incessant intercession still
 ‘ keeping the way to the throne of grace open for us,
 ‘ and our poor performances. Suffer not one of the
 ‘ sons of virtuous pride, into whose hands these sheets
 ‘ may fall, to forget that thou hast annexed *the re-*
 ‘ *ward of the inheritance* to the *assemblage of the works*
 ‘ *of faith*, or to *patient continuance in well doing*, and
 ‘ not to one or two splendid *works of hypocrisy*, done
 ‘ just to serve a worldly turn, or to bribe a disturbed
 ‘ clamorous conscience : And enable them so to feel
 ‘ the need of thy *pardon* for past transgressions, and of
 ‘ thy *power* for future obedience, that, as the chased
 ‘ hart panteth after the water-brooks, so their awak-
 ‘ ened souls may long after Christ, in whom the pe-
 ‘ nitent find inexhaustible springs of righteousness
 ‘ and strength ; and to whom, with thee, and thy
 ‘ eternal Spirit, be for ever ascribed *praise, honour,*
 ‘ and *glory* both in heaven and upon earth—PRAISE,
 ‘ for the wonders of *general redemption*, and for the
 ‘ innumerable displays of thy Free-grace unstained by
 ‘ Free-wrath — HONOUR, for bestowing the *gracious*
 ‘ *reward* of an heavenly salvation upon all believers,
 ‘ that make their election sure *by patient continuance*
 ‘ *in well-doing* — and GLORY for inflicting the *just*
 ‘ *punishment* of infernal damnation upon all that ne-
 ‘ glect so great salvation, and to the end of the ac-
 ‘ cepted time dare thy vengeance *by obstinate conti-*
 ‘ *nance in ill-doing.*’

END OF THE SCRIPTURAL ESSAY.

N

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X.

Madely, March 11, 1774.

YESTERDAY a friend lent me Mr. *Baxter's Confession of Faith*, printed in London 1655. The third part of this valuable book extends thro' above 140 large pages, and the title of that long section runs thus: *The testimony of reformed divines ascribing as much to WORKS as I: and many of them delivering the same doctrine.* He produces an hundred witnesses, some of whom are collective bodies, such as the *Assembly-divines*, the compilers of the Homilies of the Church of England, and even the Synod of Dort. As the antinomian spirit which flamed against Baxter's works in the last century, will probably sparkle against the preceding Essay, I beg leave to shelter behind that great man, and a few of his numerous quotations. I shall cite only Baxter's page, to which I refer those who desire to see the original of his Latin quotations, together with the books, chapters, and pages of the various authors.

Page 322, he quotes the following words from Bishop Davenant, 'As no man *receiveth* that general justification which dischargeth from the guilt of all *foregoing* sins, but on the concurrence of repentance, faith, a purpose of a new life, and other actions of the same kind; so no man *retaineth* a state free from guilt in respect of *following* sins, but by means of the same actions of believing in God, calling on God, mortifying the flesh, daily repenting and sorrowing for sins daily committed. The reason why all these are required on our part, is this: Because these cannot be still absent, but their opposites will be present, which are contrary to the nature of a justified man. — As therefore to the conservation

‘ conservation of natural life it is necessarily required, that a man carefully avoid fire, water, precipices, poisons, and other things destructive to the health of the body ; so to the conserving of spiritual life, it is necessarily required that a man avoid incredulity, impenitency, and other things that are destructive and contrary to the salvation of souls ; which cannot be avoided unless the opposite and contrary actions be exercised. And these actions do not conserve the life of grace properly and of themselves, by touching the very effect of conservation ; but improperly and by accident, by excluding and removing the cause of destruction.’

Page 324, Baxter produces these words of the same pious Bishop, ‘ We do therefore fight against, not the bare name of *merit*, in a harmless sense frequently used of old by the fathers, but the proud and false opinion of merit of *condignity*, brought lately by the Papists into the church of God.’

And again, page 325, ‘ The works of the regenerate have an ordination to the rewards of this life and that to come. 1. Because God hath freely promised (according to the good pleasure of his will) the rewards of this life and that to come, to the good works of the faithful and regenerate, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Gal. vi. 8. Mat. xx. 8.’

Page 328 he quotes the following passage from Dr. Twiss, ‘ It lieth on all elect to seek salvation, not only by faith, but by works also, in that without doubt salvation is to be given by way of reward, whereby God will reward not only our faith, but also all our good works.’

Page 330 and 331 he quotes Melancthon thus : ‘ New obedience is necessary by necessity of order of the cause and effect, also by necessity of duty or command, also by necessity of retaining faith, and avoiding punishments temporal and eternal.’—— ‘ Cordatus stirreth up against me the city, and also the neighbor countries, and also the court itself, because in explaining the controversie of justifica-

‘ tion I said, that new obedience was necessary to
‘ salvation.’

Page 360, 361, he quotes these words of Zanchius :
‘ Works are necessary : 1. To justify our faith [coram
‘ Deo] before God, &c. 2. They are necessary to the
‘ obtaining eternal life, &c. 3. They are necessary
‘ to inherit justification as CAUSES, &c. 4. They are
‘ profitable to conserve and increase faith : also to
‘ PROMERIT of God and obtain many good things
‘ both spiritual and corporal both in this life and in
‘ another.’ The words of Zanchius are, ‘ *Opera utilia*
‘ *sunt, &c. ad multa bona tum spiritualia tum corpora-*
‘ *lia, tum in hac vita tum in alia a Deo PROMERENDA*
‘ *et obtinenda.*’ Zanch. Tom. 8, p. 787. loc : de just.
fidei. How much more tenderly did Mr. Wesley
speak of *merit* than the orthodox, whom Mr. Toplady
has lately rendered famous among us ! I hope, that if
this gentleman ever opens his favourite book to the
above-quoted page, he will drop his prejudices, and
confess, that his dear Zanchius himself nobly contends
for the Wesleyan “ heresy.”

Page 462, Baxter concludes his book by praying
for those, who had misrepresented him to the world,
and obliged him to spend so much time in vindicat-
ing his doctrine. I most heartily join him in the last
paragraph of his prayer, in which I beg the reader
would join us both. ‘ The Lord illuminate and
‘ send forth some messenger, that may acquaint the
‘ churches with that *true, middle, reconciling method of*
‘ *theological verities, which must be the means of heal-*
‘ *ing our divisions.* Let men be raised of greater suf-
‘ ficiency for this work, and of such blessed accom-
‘ plishments as shall be fit to cope with the power of
‘ prejudice : and let the fury of blind contradiction
‘ be so calmed, that TRUTH may have opportunity
‘ to do its work.’

End of the APPENDIX to the SCRIPTURAL ESSAY.

AN ESSAY

AN
 ESSAY ON TRUTH,
 BEING A
 RATIONAL VINDICATION
 Of the Doctrine of *Salvation by Faith* :
 WITH A
 DEDICATORY EPISTLE

To the Right Hon. the Countess of HUNTINGDON.

Without Faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin, Rom. xiv. 23. Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone, (it is mere solifidianism.) James ii. 17. Good works spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith. XII. Art. In Christ Jesus, &c. nothing availeth but FAITH, which WORKETH by love, Gal. v. 6. He that believeth, and is baptized [baptism, the first and capital work of evangelical obedience, being here mentioned for all other good works, which we engage to do when we are baptized] shall be saved : but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16.

A DEDICATORY EPISTLE

To the Right Hon. the Countess of HUNTINGDON.

My LADY,

BECAUSE I think it my duty to defend the *works of faith* against the triumphant errors of the Solidians, some of your Ladyship's friends conclude, that I am an enemy to the doctrine of *salvation by faith*, and their conclusion amounts to such exclamations as these: How could a Lady, so zealous for God's glory and the Redeemer's grace, commit the superintendency of a seminary of pious learning to a man, that opposes the *fundamental* doctrine of protestantism! How could she put her sheep under the care of such a wolf in sheep's clothing! This conclusion, my Lady, has grieved me for your sake; and to remove the blot that it indirectly fixes upon you, as well as to balance my Scriptural Essay on the rewardableness of the works of faith, I publish, and humbly dedicate to your Ladyship, this last piece of my *EQUAL CHECK* to *pharisaism* and *antinomianism*. May the kindness, which enabled you to bear for years with the coarseness of my ministrations, incline you favourably to receive this little token of my unfeigned attachment to protestantism, and of my lasting respect for your Ladyship!

Your aversion to all that looks like controversy, can never make you think, that an *Equal Check* to the two grand delusions, which have crept into the church, is needless in our days. I flatter myself therefore, that tho' you may blame my *performance*, you will approve of my *design*. And indeed what true christian can be absolutely neuter in this controversy? If *God has a controversy* with all *pharisees* and *antinomians*, have not all God's children a controversy with *pharisaism* and *antinomianism*? Have you not for one, my Lady? Do you not check in private, what I attempt to check in public? Does not the religious world
know

know that you abhor, attack, and pursue *pharisaism* in its most artful disguises ? And have I not frequently heard you express in the strongest terms your detestation of *antinomianism*, and lament the number of sleeping professors, whom that Delilah robs of their strength ? Nor would you, I am persuaded, my Lady, have countenanced the opposition, which was made against the minutes, if your commendable, tho' (as it appears to me) at that time too precipitate zeal against *pharisaism*, had not prevented your seeing, that they contain the scripture truths, which are fittest to stop the rapid progress of *antinomianism*.

However, if you still think, my Lady, that I mistake with respect to the importance of those propositions ; you know, I am not mistaken, when I declare before the world, that a *powerful, practical, actually-saving* faith, is the only faith, I ever heard your Ladyship recommend, as worthy to be contended for. And so long as you plead only for such a faith ; so long as you abhor the winter-faith that saves the solifidians in their own conceit, while they commit adultery, murder, and incest, if they chuse to carry antinomianism to such a dreadful length ; so long as you are afraid to maintain either directly or indirectly, that the *evidence* and *comfort* of justifying faith may indeed be suspended by sin ; but that the *righteousness* of faith, and the *justification*, which it instrumentally procures, can never be lost, no not by the most enormous and complicated crimes ; whatever diversity there may be between your Ladyship's sentiments and mine, it can never be fundamental. I preach salvation by a faith, that *actually* works by obedient love : and your Ladyship witnesses salvation by an *actually-operative* faith : nor can I, to this day, see any material difference between those phrases : for if I profess a faith that is *actually* operative, I cannot with propriety find fault with a faith that *actually* operates : I cannot with decency sacrifice its works to " antinomian dotages." †

Permit me also to observe, that the grand questions debated between my opponents and me, are not [as I fear

† The name which Flavel gives to Dr. Crisp's modish tenets.

fear your Ladyship apprehends] whether pharisaic merit shall eclipse the Redeemer's worthiness; or, whether the doctrine of salvation by a *lively* faith shall be given up to mere moralists: I no more plead either for the one or the other, than I do for placing the pretender upon the British throne, and for sacrificing the great charter to arbitrary power. No my Lady — What we contend about is: (1) Whether Christ's *law* is not perfectly consistent with his *blood*: (2) Whether we are to set him at nought as a PROPHET, a KING, and a JUDGE; under pretence of exalting him as a PRIEST, an ADVOCATE, and a SURETY of the *better covenant*, that threatens fallen believers with a *severer punishment* than that, which was inflicted upon the despisers of the Mosaic covenant: (3) Whether the evangelical *worthiness*, which a true believer *really* derives from Christ, is not absolutely necessary to salvation: (4) Whether such a *worthiness* is not as consistent with Christ's original and paramount merit, as the light, that shines in your apartment, is consistent with the original and transcendent brightness of the sun: (5) Whether that faith is *living*, which evidences itself by gross immoralities: (6) Whether it is not rather the "*dead faith*" that St. James exclaims against: And (7) Whether the solidians do not set up *the abomination of desolation in the holy place*, when they directly or † INDIRECTLY teach, that all believers may go any length in sin without losing their heavenly thrones, or the divine favour: that a man can have the justifying, saving, operative faith, which your Ladyship pleads for, while he adds idolatry to incontinence; murder to adultery, and curses to the repeated denial of Jesus Christ: that fallen believers, who have returned to their sins *as a sow that is washed, does to her wallowing in the mire*, stand immaculate before God in a robe of imputed righteousness, even while they *turn God's grace*

† Mr. H—ll has done it *directly* in the fourth of the five letters which he has inscribed to me, and all the Solidians do it *indirectly*.

grace into lasciviousness and commit all uncleanness with greediness : that they shall all infallibly sing in heaven, in consequence of their most grievous falls on earth ; and that a kind of hypocritical, lying free-grace is to be preached to all sinners, which *necessarily* shuts up most of them under the absolute free-wrath of a God ever graceless, and ever merciless towards the majority of mankind.

Now, my Lady, as I am persuaded that you do not admire such an *immoral* and *narrow* gospel ; as I believe, that, if at any time it creeps into your chapels, it is without your approbation, under the mask of decency, and only by the means of the specious phrases of *free gospel*, *electing*, *everlasting love*, *finished salvation*, and *free, distinguishing grace*, which, according to the analogy of the modish faith, **SWEETLY** make way for the inseparable and **BITTER** doctrines of a *confined gospel*, of *everlasting hate*, *reprobating unmercifulness*, *finished damnation*, and *free, distinguishing wrath* ; and as I do your Ladyship the justice to acknowledge, that your most earnest desire is to support what appears to you a *free* and *holy* gospel at the expence of your fortune, life, and character ; I beg, my Lady, you will also do me the justice to believe, that if I oppose the solifidian-gospel of the day, it is only because it appears to me a *confined* and *unholy* gospel, calculated to foster the antinomianism of Laodicean believers, and to render Christ's undefiled religion *contemptible* to the **RATIONAL**, and *execrable* to the **MORAL** world. If you grant me this request, I shall only trouble you with one more, which is to believe, that, notwithstanding the part I have taken in the present controversy, I remain with my former respect and devotedness,

My Lady,

Your Ladyship's

Most obliged and obedient

Madeley, March 12,

Servant in the Gospel,

1774.

J. FLETCHER.

AN

A N

E S S A Y O N T R U T H, &c.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

EXCEEDINGLY sorry should I be, if the testimony which I have borne to the necessity of *good* works, caused any of my readers to do the worst of *bad* works, that is, to neglect *believing*, and to depend upon some of the external, *faithless* performances, which conceited pharisees call “good works;” and by which they absurdly think to make amends for their sins, to purchase the Divine favour, to set aside God’s mercy, and to supersede Christ’s atoning blood. Therefore, lest some unwary souls, going from one extreme to the other, should so unfortunately avoid antinomianism, as to run upon the rocks, which are rendered famous by the destruction of the pharisees, I shall *once more* vindicate the fundamental, anti-pharisaic doctrine of *salvation by faith*: I say *once more*, because I have already done it in my guarded sermon: and to the scriptures, articles, and arguments produced in that piece, I shall now add rational, and yet scriptural observations, which, together with appeals to matter of fact, will, I hope, soften the prejudices of judicious moralists against the doctrine of faith, and reconcile considerate solidians to the doctrine of works. In order to this, I design in general to prove, that true faith is the only plant, which can possibly bear good works; that it loses its operative nature, and dies when it produces them not; and that it as much surpasses good works in importance, as the motion of the heart does all other bodily motions. Enquire we first into the nature and ground of saving faith,

S E C.

* * * * *

S E C T I O N I.

A plain definition of SAVING FAITH, how believing is the Gift of God, and whether it is in our power to believe.

WHAT is *faith*? It is *believing heartily*.—What is *saving faith*? I dare not say, that it is “believing heartily, my sins are forgiven me for Christ’s sake;” for, if I live in sin, that belief is a *destructive* conceit, and not *saving* faith. Neither dare I say, that “saving faith is *only* a sure trust and confidence, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me;” † for, if I did, I should damn almost all mankind for 4000 years. [See note 13, p. 43] Such definitions of saving faith are, I fear, too *narrow* to be just, and too *unguarded* to keep out solifidianism. A comparison may convince my readers of it. If they desired me to define *man*, and I said, “*Man* is a rational animal, that lives in France in the year 1774;” would they not ask me, whether I suppose, all the rational animals, that lived on this side the English channel in 1773 were *brutes*? And if you desired to know what I mean by *saving* faith, and I replied: It is a supernatural belief, that Christ has actually atoned for my sins upon the cross; would you not ask me, whether Abraham, the father of the faithful, who would have believed a lie if he had believed this, had only *damning* faith?

To

† When the church of England, and Mr. Wesley give us particular definitions of faith, it is plain, that they consider it according to the *christian* dispensation; the privileges of which must be principally insisted upon among christians; and that our church and Mr. Wesley guard faith against antinomianism, is evident from their maintaining, as well as St. Paul, that by bad works we lose a good conscience, and make *shipwreck of the faith*.

To avoid therefore such mistakes ; to contradict no scriptures ; to put no black mark of DAMNATION upon any man, that in any nation fears God and works righteousness ; to leave no room for solifidianism ; and to present the reader with a definition of faith adequate to *the everlasting gospel*, I would chuse to say, that “justifying or saving faith is *believing* the saving truth *with the heart unto* internal, and [as we have opportunity] *unto external righteousness*, according to our light and dispensation.” To St. Paul’s words, Rom. x. 10, I add the epithets *internal* and *external*, in order to exclude, according to 1 John iii. 7, 8, the filthy imputation, under which fallen believers may, if we credit the antinomians, commit internal and external adultery, mental and bodily murder, without the least reasonable fear of endangering their faith, their interest in God’s favour, and their inamissible title to a throne of glory.

But, “How is Faith the gift of God ?”—Some persons think, that Faith is as much out of our power, as the lightening that shoots from a distant cloud : they suppose, that God drives sinners to the fountain of Christ’s blood, as irresistibly as the infernal *Legion* drove the herd of swine into the sea of Galilee ; and that a man is as passive in the first act of faith, as Jonah was in the act of the fish, which cast him upon the shore. Hence, the *absurd* plea of many, who lay fast hold on the horns of the Devil’s altar, UNBELIEF, and cry out, “We can no more believe, than we can make a world.”

I call this an *absurd* plea for several reasons : (1) It supposes, that when God commands all men every where to repent, and to believe the gospel, he commands them to do what is as impossible to them as the making of a new world. — (2) It supposes, that the terms of the covenant of *grace* are much harder than the terms of the covenant of *works*. For the old covenant required only perfect human obedience : but the new covenant requires of us the work of an almighty God, i. e. *believing* ; a work this, which upon the scheme I oppose,

is

is as impossible to *us* as the creation of a world, in which we can never have an hand. — (3) It supposes, that the promise of salvation being suspended upon *believing*, a thing as impracticable to us as the making of a new world, we shall as infallibly be damned, if God does not believe in, or for us, as we should be, if we were to make a world on pain of damnation, and God would not make it in our place. — (4) It supposes, that believing is a work, which belongs to God alone: for no man in his senses can doubt but *creating a world*, or its tantamount, *believing*, is a work which none but God can manage. — (5) It supposes, that [if he, who *believeth not the divine record, makes God a liar, and shall be damned*] whenever unbelievers are called upon to believe, and God refuses them the power to do it, he as much forces them to make him a liar and to be damned, as the king would force me to give him the lie and to be hanged, if he put me in circumstances, where I could have no chance of avoiding that crime and punishment, but by submitting to the alternative of creating a world. — (6) It supposes, that when Christ *marveled at the unbelief* of the Jews, he shewed as little wisdom as I should, were I to marvel at a man for not creating three worlds as quickly as a believer can say the three creeds. — (7) That when Christ *reproved* his disciples for their unbelief, he acted more unreasonably, than if he had rebuked them for not adding a new star to every constellation in heaven. — (8) That to exhort people to *continue in the faith*, is to exhort them to something as difficult, as to continue creating worlds. — And lastly, that when Christ fixes our damnation upon *unbelief* [see Mark xvi. 16, and John iii. 18.] he acts far more tyrannically than the king would do, if he issued out a proclamation informing all his subjects, that whosoever shall not by such a time raise a new island within the British seas, shall be infallibly put to the most painful and lingering death.

Having thus exposed the erroneous sense, in which some people suppose, that *faith is the gift of God*; I

beg leave to mention in what sense it appears to me to be so. *Believing* is the gift of God's grace, as *cultivating* the root of a rare flower given you, or *raising* a crop of corn in your field, is the gift of God's providence.—*Believing* is the gift of the God of GRACE, as *breathing, moving, and eating*, are the gifts of the God of NATURE. He gives me lungs and air, that I may breathe; he gives me life and muscles, that I may move; he bestows upon me food and a mouth, that I may eat; and when I have no stomach, he gives me common sense to see, I must die or force myself to take some nourishment or some medicine: but he neither *breathes, moves, nor eats* for me; nay, when I think proper, I can accelerate my breathing, motion, and eating: and if I please I may even *fast, lie down, or hang myself*, and by that means put an end to my *eating, moving and breathing*.—Again, Faith is the gift of God to a believer, as the prince of Wales is the gift of God to the queen: She bore him herself by the blessing of God upon her *free* marriage with the king, and by the wonders of providence, which capacitated her *freely* to become a royal mother.—Once more, *Faith* is the gift of God to believers as *light* is to you. The Parent of good freely gives you the light of the sun, and organs proper to receive it: he places you in a world, where that light visits you daily: he apprizes you, that light is conducive to your safety, pleasure, and profit: and every thing around you bids you use your eyes and see: nevertheless you may not only drop your curtains, and extinguish your candle, but close your eyes also. This is exactly the case with regard to Faith. Free grace removes (in part) the total blindness which Adam's fall brought upon us: Free grace gently sends us some beams of truth, which is the light of *the sun of righteousness*; it disposes the eyes of our understanding to see those beams; it excites us various ways to welcome them; it blesses us with many, perhaps with all the means of faith, such as opportunities to hear, read, enquire; and power to consider, assent, consent, resolve

solve and re-resolve to believe the truth. But, after all, *believing* is as much our own act as *seeing*: We may in general do, suspend, or omit the act of faith; especially when that act is not yet become *habitual*, and when the glaring light, that *sometimes* accompanies the revelation of the truth, is abated. Nay, we may imitate Pharaoh, Judas, and all reprobates: we may do by the eye of our faith, what some report, Democritus did by his bodily eyes. Being tired of seeing the follies of mankind, to rid himself of that disagreeable sight he put his eyes out: We may be so averse from *the light, which enlightens every man that comes into the world*, we may so dread it because our works are evil, as to exemplify, like the pharisees, such awful declarations as these: *Their eyes have they closed, lest they should see, &c. — wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate mind, and they were blinded.*

When St. Paul says, that christians *believe according to the working of God's mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*; he chiefly alludes to the resurrection of Christ, and the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost; the former of these wonders being the great object of the *christian* faith, and the latter displaying the great privilege of the *christian* dispensation. To suppose therefore, that no body savingly believes, who does not believe according to an *actual*, overwhelming display of God's almighty power, is as unscriptural as to maintain, that God's people no longer believe, than he actually repeats the wonders of Easter-day, and of the day of Pentecost. Is it not clear, that the apostle had no such notions, when he wrote to the Corinthians? *I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which you have received, wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory — (if ye hold fast, as the original means) what I preached unto you, unless ye have BELIEVED in vain. For I declared unto you, &c. that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the scriptures, &c. so we preach, and so ye believed.* Again, how plain is the

the account, that our Lord and his forerunner give us of faith and unbelief! *Verily we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness—What he (Christ) hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man (comparatively) receiveth his testimony: but he that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.* This is as intelligible as the following lines of the 22d hymn in the Rev. Mr. Madan's collection :

Ye need NOT ONE be left behind,
 For God hath bidden ALL mankind.
 Do not begin to *make excuse* :
 Ah ! do not ye his grace *refuse*, &c.
 Ye who *believe his record true*,
 Shall sup with him and he with you ;
 'Come to the feast, be sav'd from sin,
 For Jesus *waits* to take you in.
This is the time, no more delay,
This is the glorious gospel-day ;
 Come in *this moment* at his call,
 And live for him who died for all.

Two things have chiefly given room to our mistakes, respecting the *strange impossibility* of believing : The *first* is our confounding the truths, which characterize the several gospel-dispensations. We see, for example, that a poor besotted drunkard, an over-reaching greedy tradesman, a rich sceptical epicure, and a proud ambitious courtier, have no more taste for the *gospel of Christ*, than a horse and a mule have for the high-seasoned dishes that crown a royal table. An immense gulph is fixed between them, and the *christian faith*. In their present state they can no more believe *in Christ*, than an unborn infant can become a man without passing thro' infancy and youth. But, altho' they cannot yet believe *in Christ*, may they not believe *in God* according to the import of our Lord's words, *Ye believe IN GOD, believe also IN ME* ? If the *pharisees* COULD NOT believe IN CHRIST, it was not because

because God never gave them a power equal to that which created the world; but, because they were practical atheists, who actually rejected the *morning light* of the *jewish* dispensation, and by that means absolutely unfitted themselves for the *meridian light* of the *christian* dispensation. This is evident from our Lord's own words: *I know you, that ye have not the love of God, or a regard for God in you. I come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not, tho' you might do it; for, if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can YE BELIEVE, who receive honour one of another? &c. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For, had ye believed MOSES, and submitted to his dispensation, ye would have believed ME, and submitted to my gospel. But if ye believe not HIS WRITINGS, how shall ye believe MY WORDS?*

The *second* cause of our mistake about the impossibility of *believing now*, is the confounding of faith with its fruits and rewards; which naturally leads us to think, that we cannot believe, or that our faith is vain, till those rewards and fruits appear. But is not this being ingenious to make the worst of things? Had Abraham no faith in God's promise, till Isaac was born? Was Sarah a damnable unbeliever, till she felt the long-expected fruit of her womb stir there? Had the woman of Canaan no faith, till our Lord granted her request, and cried out, *O woman great is thy faith, let it be done unto thee even as thou wilt?* Was the centurion an infidel, till Christ *marveled at his faith*, and declared, *he had not found such faith no not in Israel?* Was Peter faithless, till his master said, *Blessed art thou Simon bar Jonah?* &c. Did the weeping penitent begin to believe only when Christ said to her, *Go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee?* And had the apostles no faith in *the promise of the Father*, till their heads were actually crowned with celestial fire? Should we not distinguish between our *sealing the truth of our dispensation* with the seal of our faith, according to our present light and ability; and between God's *sealing the truth of our faith* with the seal of his

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power,

of this truth, will make way for their receiving the higher truths, that stand between them and the top of the mysterious ladder of truth. I grant, it is impossible they should leap at once to the middle, much less to the highest round of that ladder; but if the foot of it is upon earth, in the very nature of things, the lowest step is within their reach, and by laying hold of it, they may go on *from faith to faith*, till they stand firm even in the *christian* faith; if distinguishing grace has elected them to hear the *christian* gospel. The most sudden conversions imply this gradual transition. As in the very nature of things, when *the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip* from the Eunuch, and transported him to Azotus, he made Philip's body rapidly measure *all* the distance between the wilderness of Gaza and Azotus: so, when he helped the Philippian jailor from the gates of hell to the gates of heaven in one night, he made him rapidly pass thro' the fear of God, the dread of his justice, and the pangs of penitential desires after salvation, before he entered into the joyous rest, that remains for those that heartily believe in Christ. Nor is this quick, tho' gradual, transition from midnight darkness to noon-day light, an unintelligible mystery; since we are witnesses of a similar event every revolving day. The vegetable and the animal world help us likewise to understand the nature of sudden conversions. Every philosopher knows, that a mushroom passes thro' almost as many stages of the vegetative life in six hours, as an oak does in two hundred: and those animalcula that frisk into life in the morning of a summer's day, propagate their species at noon, are old at four o'clock, and dead at six, measure the length of animal life as really, as Methuselah did in his millennium.

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SECTION II.

Saving Truth is the object of saving Faith : What TRUTH is, and what great things are spoken of it and of the WORD. Our salvation turns upon it.

IT appears by the preceding section, that *saving* TRUTH is the ground and object of *saving* FAITH : but, "What is TRUTH?"—This is the awful question, that Pilate once asked of him, who was best able to answer it. But alas ! Pilate was so hurried by the lying fear of man, that he did not stay for an answer. May I venture to give one. — TRUTH is spiritual substance ; and a LIE, spiritual shadow. TRUTH is spiritual light ; and a LIE, spiritual darkness. TRUTH is the root of all *virtue*, and a LIE is the root of all *vice*. TRUTH is the celestial tincture, that makes spirits good ; and a LIE, the infernal tincture, that makes them evil. A LIE is as nearly related to the Devil, as infection to one that has the plague, or opacity to the earth : and TRUTH is as nearly related to God, as fragrancy to burning incense, and light to the unclouded sun.

According to this definition of TRUTH and ERROR, may we not give plain and scriptural answers to some of the deepest questions in the world ?—What is God ? The reverse of *the prince of darkness*, and of *the father of lies* : He is *the father of lights*, and *the God of Truth* : He is *Light*, and in him is *no darkness at all*.—What is Christ ? He is *the brightness of his Father's glory* ; a light ; a great light to them that dwell in the shadow of death. He is *the TRUTH* ; *the TRUE Witness* ; *the TRUTH ITSELF* ; *Emmanuel, God with us, full of grace and TRUTH*.—What is the Holy Ghost ? *The Spirit of TRUTH* : Yea, says St. John, *The Spirit is TRUTH*, and *leads into all TRUTH*.—What is the Devil ? *The Spirit of ERROR*, the multitude of *LYING Spirits* and their

their prince ; he that *abode not in the TRUTH* ; in whom there is no TRUTH, and who deceives the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth. Again,

What is the Gospel ? *The word of TRUTH, the word of God, the word of faith, the word of the kingdom, the word of life, and the word of salvation.* — What are Gospel-ministers ? Men that *bear witness to the TRUTH* ; that *rightly divide the word of TRUTH* ; that are *fellow-helpers to the TRUTH* ; that *speak forth the words of TRUTH* ; and are *valiant for the TRUTH upon the earth.* — What is the preaching of the Gospel ? *The manifestation of the TRUTH.* — What is it to believe the gospel ? It is to *receive the KNOWLEDGE of the TRUTH* ; to *receive the LOVE of the TRUTH* ; and to *obey the TRUTH.* — What is it to mistake the gospel ? It is to *err from the TRUTH* ; to *turn after fables* ; and to *give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.* — What is the true Church ? *The pillar and ground of TRUTH, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.* — What is the first fruit of sincere repentance ? *The acknowledging of the TRUTH.* — What are believers ? Persons that are *chosen to salvation thro' the unneccessitated belief of the TRUTH* ; that are of the TRUTH ; that *know the TRUTH* ; that *have the TRUTH in their inward parts* ; that *have a good report of the TRUTH* ; in whom dwells the TRUTH ; who have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus ; in whom is the TRUTH of Christ ; who have learned Christ ; have purified their souls by obeying the TRUTH ; and walk in the TRUTH. — What are unstable souls ? People ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the TRUTH, with whom the TRUTH of the gospel does not continue, and who are wilfully bewitched, that they should not obey the TRUTH. — What are obstinate unbelievers ? Men of corrupt minds, destitute of the TRUTH ; unreasonable men, that resist the TRUTH ; that glory and lie against the TRUTH ; that walk in darkness, and do not the TRUTH. — What are apostates ? Men that sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the TRUTH, and, instead of repenting, count the blood of the

the covenant, wherewith they WERE sanctified, an unholy thing. — What are perfect men in Christ? Men that are established in the present TRUTH, i. e. in the TRUTH revealed under the christian dispensation, and that can do nothing against the TRUTH, but for the TRUTH.

If all turns thus upon TRUTH, and if TRUTH is at once spiritual light, and the object of saving faith, it follows: (1) That to *walk in the TRUTH*, to *walk in the LIGHT*, and to *walk by FAITH*, are phrases of the same import: (2) That to be converted is to be *turned from darkness to LIGHT*, that is, from the practical belief of a lie to the practical belief of the TRUTH; or, as St. Paul expresses it, *from the power of Satan unto God*: And (3) That the chief business of the Tempter, is to *take the word of truth out of our hearts, lest we should believe and be saved*: or, in other terms, to *blind our minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto us.*

If Jesus Christ is the *Truth*, the *Light*, the *Life*, and the *WORD*, that *was in the beginning with God, and was God*; the *WORD*, by which all things were made, and are preserved — If he is the *Light*, that *shineth in darkness*, even when the darkness comprehendeth it not — If he is the *true Light*, which *lighteth every man, that cometh into the world*, while the day of salvation lasts — If he is the archetype, the eternal, living pattern of all saving Truth — If he is the essential, almighty *WORD*, from whom revealed *Truth*, and the *Word* of our salvation flow as constantly, as light and heat from the sun: do we not slight him, and despise eternal life; when we slight the TRUTH, and despise the WORD? And may not the great things spoken of the *Word*, confirm what has been said of the *Truth*, and help us to answer the questions already proposed in a manner equally scriptural and conclusive?

Not forgetting that there is such a thing as the *Word nigh*, the *Word behind us*, the *still small voice*, and the *word of that grace*, which has appeared unto all men, teaching them to deny worldly lusts, and to live soberly, &c. I ask: What are evangelists? Men, who bear

bear record of the WORD of God, and bear witness of the LIGHT, that all men may believe: Sowers, that sow the WORD of the kingdom; holding forth the WORD of life. — What is the Devil? An enemy, who sows the tares of error in the night of ignorance, while men sleep in carnal security. — What are false Apostles? Men, that corrupt the WORD of God, that handle the WORD of God deceitfully, and preach another gospel; whose WORDS eat as does a canker — What are Believers? People, that hear the WORD of God and keep it; that are begotten of God by the WORD of Truth; that are born again by the WORD of God; that hear the SAYINGS of Christ, and do them; in whose hearts the WORD of Christ dwells richly; who receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the WORD of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe it: They are persons, that receive with meekness the engrafted WORD, which is able to save their souls; that have tasted the good WORD of God; that desire the sincere milk of the WORD, that they may grow thereby; that gladly receive the WORD; have God's WORD abiding in them; are made clean thro' the WORD, which Christ speaks, by his ministers, his scriptures, his spirit, his works, or his rod; and in whom the seed of that WORD produces thirty fold, sixty fold, or an hundred fold, according to their light, faithfulness, and opportunity.

Again, What are Unbelievers? Antinomian hypocrites, that hear the SAYINGS of Christ, and do them not; or pharisaic despisers, that stumble at the WORD, speak against those things, which are spoken by God's messengers; contradicting and blaspheming; and who, by putting the WORD of God from them, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. — What are Martyrs? Witnesses of the truth, slain for the WORD of God. — And what are Apostates? Believers, in whom the WORD is choaked by the cares of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches; who fall away when persecution ariseth because of the WORD; by reason of whom the way of TRUTH is evil spoken of; and in whom the seed of the WORD becometh unfruitful. — Thus all turns still upon TRUTH and the WORD of God.

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S E C T I O N III.

That according to reason and scripture, there is a saving, almighty power in TRUTH, and the WORD of God.

SHOULD the reader ask here, how it is possible, the WORD and the TRUTH should be so nearly related to our Saviour, that to receive them is to receive Him, and to reject them is to reject Him, and his salvation : I answer, that, in the spiritual, as well as in the political and mercantile world, it is impossible to do business without some *signs* to convey our thoughts and resolutions. Hence the use of letters, notes, bonds and charters ; of revelations, traditions, scriptures, and sacraments. Now an honest man's *word* is as good as his *bond* or *pledge*, and as true as his *heart* ; his *word* or *bond* being nothing but his *mind* or determination, fairly conveyed to others by the means of his *tongue*, or of his *hand*. Therefore, in the very nature of things, to receive the *Word* of Christ, is to receive *Christ*, who *dwells in our hearts* BY FAITH ; whom believers *know now after the flesh no more* ; who commissioned his favourite apostle to say, *He that abideth in the DOCTRINE of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son* ; and who personally declares, *My mother and my brothers are these, that hear the WORD of God, and keep it.*

As the legislative power has appointed, that pure gold duly stamped, and bank-notes properly drawn up, shall represent the value, and procure the possession of all the necessities and conveniencies of life, which can be bought with money : So our heavenly Lawgiver has fixed, that the *Word of Truth* shall answer in his spiritual kingdom, the end of *gold* and *letters of exchange* in the kingdoms of this world : And this spiritual gold, this *Word* tried to the uttermost, he offers to all that are *poor and blind, and naked, that they*

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may

may be rich in faith. “ *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich.*”

Again : as a *will* conveys an immense fortune ; and a *death-warrant*, a capital punishment : so does the *Word* of God convey the *unsearchable riches* of Christ to obedient believers, and the dreadful punishments of the damned to obstinate unbelievers. I readily grant that a *bank-note* is NOT gold, that a *will* is NOT an *estate*, and that a *death-warrant* is NOT the *gallows* ; nevertheless, so strong is the connexion between those seemingly insignificant *signs*, and the important *things*, which they signify ; that none but fools will throw away their bank-notes, or the wills of their friends, as waste-paper ; none but mad men will sport with their death-warrant as with a play-bill. Now if the written *word* of men { who, thro’ forgetfulness, fickleness, impotence, or unfaithfulness, often break their engagements } can nevertheless have such force as *wills*, *bank-notes*, and *death-warrants* ; how excessively fool-hardy are sinners, that disregard the *WORD* of the King of kings, *who cannot lie !* the proclamations of the *God of Truth*, with whom NO *WORD* is impossible ! the promises and threatnings, the will and testament of the Almighty, who says, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORD shall not pass away !*

Once more : Altho’ no man knows the Father immediately but the Son, yet the Father may be mediately known by his *Works*, his *Word*, and his *Son*. For, [leaving room for the liberty of moral agents and their works] God’s *Works* are always as his *Word* : Hence we read, *God SAID, Let there be light, and there was light : Cursed be the ground for man’s sake, and the ground was cursed : For he SPAKE, and it was DONE ; he COMMANDED, and it STOOD FAST.* As God’s *Works* are the express image of his *Word* uttered without—of his *out-going Word* (if I may so speak :) so his *out-going Word* is the express image of his *immanent, essential Word*, which is his eternal mind, and which the scriptures call indifferently *the Word*, *the Wisdom*, *the Son of God*, or *the express image of his Father’s*

ther's glory. Hence it appears, that as the essential Word, Christ, is one with the Father ; so the word of saving Truth is one with the Son : and that David, Solomon and St. Paul spoke noble truths when they said : *Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed — By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the ways of the destroyer. — The law, or word of the Lord is an undefiled word : it is sure and giveth wisdom to the simple : it is right and rejoiceth the heart, it is pure and giveth light : it is true and righteous altogether ; more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; — better to me than thousands of gold and silver ; — sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb : — It is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path : — by it is thy servant taught, and made wise to salvation, thro' faith on his part ; and in keeping of it there is great reward, even the reward of the inheritance, a kingdom of grace here, and a kingdom of glory hereafter.*

But let our Lord himself be heard, and he will join himself in mystic trinity to the *Word*, and to the *Truth* of God. He promiscuously uses the expressions *Truth* and *Word*, which make the burden of the last section. When he recommends his disciples to his Father, he says, *Sanctify them thro' thy TRUTH, thy WORD is TRUTH* : Hence it appears, that the *Truth* and the *Word* are terms of the same import ; that the *Word of Truth* is a *sanctifying* emanation from God, and the ordinary vehicle of the divine power ; and that our Lord uttered a rational mystery when he said, *He that receiveth you [the witnesses of my Truth, and the sowers of MY WORD] receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* But, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of ME, and of MY WORDS, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father.* — And imperfect believers he encouraged thus : *If ye continue in my WORD, &c. ye shall know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH shall make you free, &c. If the SON shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* — Important scriptures these, which show the connexion of the *TRUTH* with the *SON* of God ! Blessed scriptures,

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which

which St. Paul sums up in the following words ! *Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven ? (that is to bring CHRIST down from above) Or, Who shall descend into the deep ? (that is to bring up CHRIST again from the dead.) But what saith the righteousness which is of faith ? The WORD is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the WORD of Truth, the WORD of faith, which we preach.*

Nor is this doctrine of the apostle contrary to what he says on another occasion : *The kingdom of God is not in WORD, but in POWER, i. e. true religion does not consist in fine talking, but in powerful believing and holy living : For what is more powerful than Truth ? " Truth is great, and will prevail : " Truth is the strongest thing in the world : It overturns the thrones of tyrants, and supports God's everlasting throne.*

Again, the word of man brings strange things to pass. Let but a general speak, and an army of Russians marches up thro' clouds of smoke, flames of fire, and volleys of iron balls, to form heaps of dead or dying bodies before the entrenchments of the Turks. An admiral gives the *word* of command, it may be only by hoisting a flag ; and a fleet is under sail ; artificial clouds and thunders are formed over the sea ; the billows seem to be mingled with fire ; and the king of terrors flies from deck to deck in his most dreadful and bloody forms.

If such is the power of the *word* of a *man*, who is but a worm ; how almighty must be the *word* of God ! — *By the WORD of the Lord were the heavens made*, saith David : *The worlds were framed by the WORD of God*, adds St. Paul, and *he upholdeth all things by the WORD of his power*. That word, no NECESSARY agents can resist. It rolls the planets with as much ease as hurricanes whirl the dust. If FREE agents can resist his WORD of COMMAND, it is only because he permits it for their trial. But, woe to them that resist it to the end of their day of probation : For they shall feel the RESISTLESS force of his WORD of PUNISHMENT : *" Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."*

And

And who is the God that shall break the adamantine, infernal chains, which that dreadful word will rivet upon them ?

We read in the gospel, that our Lord *marvelled* at the centurion's faith, as greater faith than he had found in Israel. But wherein consisted the peculiar greatness of that man's faith ? Is it not evident from the context, that it was in the noble and lively apprehension, which he had of the force and energy of Christ's word ? *Lord, said he, I am a man under the authority of my colonel and general, and yet having soldiers under me, I say to one, Go ; and he goeth : and to another, Come ; and he cometh, &c.* Now Lord, if MY word has such power, what cannot THINE do ? *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

Why is Abraham called *The Father of the faithful* ? Is it not because *judging him faithful* and almighty, that had PROMISED, *against hope he believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations ; according to that which was SPOKEN : So shall thy seed be ?* Is it not because he *staggered not at the promise, or word of God thro' unbelief ; but was strong in faith ; giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform ; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness ?* And shall not the like faith be imputed to us also, if we believe the saving truth revealed, or the divine record given under the present dispensation of the gospel : viz. *that God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification ?*

Oh ! who can describe the needless perplexities of those wilful unbelievers, that have the truth of their dispensation clearly brought to them, and yet like Thomas resolutely set themselves against it, saying, *I will not believe ?* And who can enumerate the blessings, which those childlike souls inherit, who, instead of quarreling with, cordially embrace the word of God, and set to their seal that God is true ? They seal God's truth, and God seals their hearts : Their faith

is imputed to them for righteousness ; their faith saves them ; it is done to them according to their faith ; The God of hope fills them with all JOY and PEACE in believing. Thus, thro' faith, they not only subdue the kingdom of darkness, but inherit the present kingdom of God, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost received by the hearing of faith. Well-disposed reader, if thou doubtest the truth of those scriptures, try it by believing now what appears to thee to be the saving truth of thy dispensation : believe it with all thy present might, be it little or be it much : and, if in a little time thou dost not find thyself more settled and free, more able to fight against sin and to take up thy cross, let me bear the blame for ever.

Did the success of God's word depend *only* upon him, the truth would always operate in a saving manner. If men were not to *work out their own salvation* by freely repenting, believing, and obeying with the power to *will and to do*, which God gives them of his good pleasure ; all mankind would repent, believe, and obey as passively as clocks go, and as regularly as the sun rises. But, we are *moral* agents ; and works *morally* good depend as much upon the concurrence of God's free grace, and of our free obedience of faith, as the birth of the prince of Wales did upon the marriage of the King and Queen. Hence we read, *To whom swear he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not, &c. for the word preached did not profit them, not because the seed was bad, or because they had no power to receive it ? [No such thing : for Moses, and after him Christ himself, marvelled BECAUSE of the unbelief of the chosen people]* but, because the word preached was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. — Wherefore, says the apostle, to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, &c. Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of UNBELIEF, &c. and exhort one another daily to believe.

The genuine seed of the word is then always good, always full of divine energy. If it does not spring

up,

up, or if after it has sprung up, it does not *bring forth fruit to perfection*, it is entirely the fault of the ground. *The words that I speak*, says our Lord, tho' it should be only by the mouth of my servants, *they are spirit and they are life to BELIEVING hearts* — Neither do I pray for these alone, who have heard the word at my mouth, but for them that shall BELIEVE on me through THEIR WORD. For Christ gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the WORD — IF it continue in the faith — holding fast the faithful WORD — the WORD of the truth of the gospel, which is come in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit since the day it is heard in faith ; it being the grand office of the Spirit, to make the word of God, when it is mixed with faith on our part, *sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and to the discerning and destroying of the bad thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Nothing therefore can be more certain than the connection between the power of God and the Truth of the gospel. — ' TRUTH [says a divine of the last century] ' is that eternal word of the Father, which ' in the Son, by the Holy Ghost is revealed to us, to ' be our guide back again to that bosom, whence it ' and we first came: It is that *Jacob's ladder*, let ' down to us from heaven to earth, whereby his angels (his messengers) lead up from earth to heaven : ' It is that *Rahab's scarlet thread*, let down from the ' window of heaven to wind us up by : The apostle ' calls it a *girdle, the girdle of TRUTH* — a girdle, that ' by many several links ending where it began, returning whence it first proceeded, clasps itself again ' in the bosom of the author, God.' According to that noble description of *Truth*, is it not evident, that all the *righteous power*, which works in the spiritual world, is the power of God and of *Truth* ? and therefore, that our Lord answered like divine Wisdom manifest in the flesh, when he asserted, that *to Believe on Him, is to work the work of God* — that *he who believeth hath everlasting life* — that *tho' he were dead, yet shall*

shall he live — that *he that liveth and believeth on him* (which implies a continuance of the action) *shall never die* — that *rivers of living water* (streams of comfort and power) *shall flow out of his belly* (i. e. spring from his inmost soul) — and that *he shall do great works*; the GOSPEL being the POWER of God to salvation to every one that BELIEVETH; and all things being possible to him that believeth, because, his faith apprehends the WORD, TRUTH and POWER of the ALMIGHTY.

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S E C T I O N IV.

There are various sorts of Truths. Idolatry and formality consist chiefly in putting INFERIOR in the room of SUPERIOR truths. Evangelical and moral i. e. religious truths alone change the heart.

WHEN I said that living Faith has SAVING truth for its object, I did not use the word *saving* without reason: for, as every stone is not *precious*, so every truth is not *saving*. There are then various sorts of Truths. "There is a sun," is a *physical* or *natural* truth—"Our ideas of the sun are mental pictures of the sun," is a *metaphysical* truth—"All the points of a circle are equally distant from the centre," is a *mathematical* truth—"No just conclusion can be drawn from false premises," is a *logical* truth—"Alexander conquered Persia," is an *historical* truth—"There is a God—and this God is to be worshiped according to the different manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," are two *religious* truths, the first of which belongs to *natural*, and the second to *revealed religion*.—"Every man is to love his neighbour as himself," is a *moral* truth.—"A spiritual Jew is circumcised in heart, and a spiritual Christian is baptized with the spirit," is an *evangelical* truth typified by the outward signs of circumcision and of baptism.

When

• When *natural* and inferior truths raise our minds to the God of *nature* and of *grace*, they answer their *spiritual* ends : But if they are put in the place of their archetypes and antitypes, *the truth of God is changed into a lie*. Take some instances of it : *The invisible things of God*, says St. Paul, *are understood by the things that are made*, or visible ; but, who considers the profound truth couched under his words ? Certainly not those heathens, who worship the *material*, instead of the *immaterial* sun : nor those Jews, who are regardless of the circumcision of the heart, and rest satisfied with an external circumcision : nor those papists, who pay divine honours to a bit of typical bread, which their fancy has turned into the identical body of our Lord : nor yet those protestants, who, being unmindful of the baptism of the Spirit, exert themselves only in sprinkling infants with, or dipping adults in material water : For they all equally forget, that *the letter of natural and typical things alone profiteth little, or nothing comparatively ; and that it killeth*, when it is opposed to *the spirit*, and made to supersede the invisible and heavenly ARCHETYPES, which *visible* and earthly things shadow out ; or when it causes us to set aside the precious ANTITYPES, which *typical* things point unto.

Thus thousands of sinners, like the rich glutton in the gospel, are spiritually, if not corporeally *killed* by meats and drinks, which should raise them to their invisible ARCHETYPES, the heavenly manna, and the wine of God's kingdom.—Thus, conjugal love, which should raise married persons to a more lively contemplation of the mystical union between the heavenly bridegroom and his faithful spouse, has a quite-contrary effect upon numbers : Absurdly resting in the fading type, they think that, “ *I have married a wife,*” is a sufficient reason to give Christ a bill of divorce, or to show him the greatest indifference.—Thus also the Jews committed the *deadly* sins of idolatry, and murder, thro' their regard for the brazen serpent and the temple ; an extravagant regard this, which

which caused them to neglect, and at last to crucify Christ, the invaluable **ANTITYPE** of both the brazen serpent and of the temple.

Hence it appears, that the sin of *formalists* is not unlike that of *idolaters*. As God has blessed his church with various *forms* of worship, and *literal* manifestations of his truth, that they might lead us to the *power* of godliness, and to the truth *in the spirit* : So he has filled the natural world with a variety of creatures, which bear some signature of his own unseen excellencies. But alas ! if we are only *formal* and *letter-learned* professors, we absurdly set up our forms and the letter, against the power and spiritual operations, which they shadow out : And if we are idolaters, we *love and serve the creature more than the Creator*, who has given us the outlines of his invisible glories in the visible creation, that in and through every thing we *might feel after him, and find him*. Thus *formality* and *idolatry* equally defeat God's gracious designs towards mankind, the one by opposing *forms*, and the other by opposing *creatures* to God.

To return : All sorts of truths, if they are kept in their proper places, may improve the understanding ; but *religious* truths only have a direct tendency to improve the will, which is the spring of our tempers and actions : Therefore, *altho' I have all knowledge but that, which is productive of charity, I am nothing* ; the faith of God's elect being **ONLY** the cordial, practical *acknowledging of the TRUTH, which is AFTER GODLINESS*—of the *saving Truth, as it is in Jesus*.

A total inattention to every kind of truth makes a man *brutish*. An eager pursuit of natural, mathematical, logical, historical truths, &c. attended with a neglect of religious truths, tends to make a man an infidel : and this neglect grown up into an obstinate, practical opposition to moral, as well as to evangelical truths, turns him into an *enemy of all righteousness*, and a persecutor.

But, when *candor*, a degree of which we may have through the light that enlightens every man ; when

when *free-agency*, assisted by the spirit of power, that accompanies the word of truth — when *candor*, I say, and *free-agency* THUS assisted, attend and submit to the RELIGIOUS truths revealed under our dispensation ; then the divine *seed falls into good ground* : Christ begins to be formed in our heart : and, according to our dispensation, *we receive power to become sons of God* : For *we* [even as many as receive with meekness the engrafted word] are all the children of God thro' faith in the light of the world—thro' faith in Christ Jesus, who is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe unto righteousness ; whether they do it with meridian light and intense fervour, as true Christians ; with morning-light and growing vigour, as pious Jews ; or only with dawning light and timorous sincerity, as converted heathens.

Some sorts of truths, like some kinds of food, are richer than others. Infants in grace must be fed with the plainest truths, which the apostle calls *milk* ; but stronger souls may feast upon what would give a surfeit to babes in Christ : For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those, who by reason of use have their spiritual senses exercised to discern both good and evil, truth and error, as quickly and as surely as our bodily senses distinguish sweet from bitter, and light from darkness. Truth is spiritual light ; too much of it might dazzle the weak eyes of our understanding. A parabolical blind is of great service in such a case. When the apostles were yet carnal, our Lord said to them, *I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now* : no not in parables. Howbeit when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all evangelical truth. A sure proof this, that truth is the light, the food, the way of souls ; and that the grand business of the Spirit is to lead us into the Truth, as we can bear it, and as we chuse to walk in it.



S E C T I O N V.

Truth cordially embraced by faith saves under every dispensation of divine grace, tho' in different degrees. A short view of the Truths that characterize the four grand dispensations of the everlasting gospel.

I Have hinted, that faith is more or less operative according to the *quality* of the truths which it embraces. This observation recommends itself to reason : For, as some wines are more generous, and some remedies more powerful ; so some truths are more reviving and sanctifying than others. But every evangelical truth, being a beam of the *Sun of righteousness* risen upon us *with healing in his wings*, is of a *SAVING* nature ; the *SAVING* grace of God, which has appeared unto all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness, &c. and to live soberly, &c. Thus I am saved from *ATHEISM*, by heartily believing, *there is a God, who will judge the world* : — from *PHARISAISM*, by firmly believing, that I am a miserable sinner, and that *without Christ I can do nothing* : — from *SADDUCEISM*, by truly believing, that *the SPIRIT ITSELF helpeth my infirmities* : — from *ANTINOMIANISM*, by cordially believing, that *God is not a Respector of persons*, but a *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, and a *Punisher of all that presumptuously break his commandments* ; — and from *DESPAIR*, by steadily believing, that *God is love*, that *he sent his only begotten Son into the world to save that which was lost*, and that *I have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous*.

Hence it appears : (1) That every religious truth suitable to our present circumstances [when it is kindly presented by free grace, and affectionately embraced by prevented free-will] instantly forms, according to its degree, the saving, *operative* faith, that converts, transforms, and renews the soul. And (2) That this faith

faith is more or less operative according to the *quality* of the truth presented to us ; according to the *power*, with which the spirit of grace impresses it upon our hearts ; and according to the *earnestness*, with which we receive, espouse, and welcome it to our inmost souls.

When God fixed the *bounds of the habitation of mankind*, he placed some nations in warm climates and fruitful countries, where the juice of the grape is plentiful next to water. And to others he assigned a barren, rocky soil covered with snow half the year : Water is their cordial, nor have they any more idea of their want of wine, than St. Peter had of his want of the blood of Christ, when he made the noble confession upon which the christian church is founded. Oh, says a predestinarian geographer, the God of providence has absolutely reprobated those " poor creatures." Not so, replies an unprejudiced philosopher ; they may be as healthy and as happy over their cup of cold water, as some of our men of fortune are over the bottles of Claret and Madeira that load their festive tables. And some of those " poor creatures," as you call them, may come from the east and from the west, to drink the wine of the kingdom of God with Abraham, when the children of the kingdom shall be thrust out.

What I have said of water and wine, may illustrate what the scriptures say of the truths peculiar to the gospel-dispensations. God forbid, that an *antichristian* zeal for the *christian* gospel should make me drive into the burning lake Christ's *sheep*, which are *big with young* : I mean the sincere worshippers, that wait like pious Melchisedec, devout Lydia, and charitable Cornelius, for brighter displays of gospel-grace : For, there are faithful souls, that follow their light under every dispensation, concerning whom our Lord kindly said, *Other sheep I have, which are not of this jewish and christian fold. Them also I must bring into marvellous light, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.* Those feeble sheep, and tender lambs I must take into
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my bosom ; and to give them their portion of meat in due season, I venture upon the following remark.

If free-will prevented by free grace *ardently* receives the truths of the *christian* gospel, *christian* faith is conceived. If the heart fervently embraces the truths of the *jewish* or *gentile*-gospel ; [those which are peculiar to the christian gospel remaining as yet veiled] the *faith* of a *jew*, or of an *heathen* is begotten. Nevertheless if this faith, let it be ever so assaulted by doubts, impregnates the soul with truth, and works by love, it is saving in its degree.

I say *in its degree* ; for as there are in the earth various rich tinctures, some of which form diamonds, while others form only rubies, emeralds, or agates ; so there are in the universal church of Christ, various tinctures of gospel-truth, which form various orders of spiritual jewels, as appears from such scriptures as these. *They that feared the Lord spake often one to another : and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.—For in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him according to the dispensation he is under, and the progress he has made in practical religion.*

This gospel, for example, “ *God hath made of one blood all nations of men, that they should seek the Lord as the gracious author of their being, and love one another as brothers* ” — this everlasting gospel, I say, has in all countries *leavened* the hearts of pious heathens with *sincerity and TRUTH*. This doctrine, “ *Messiah will come to point out clearly the way of salvation,* ” added to the gospel of the gentiles, has tintured with superior goodness the heart of all believing Jews. This truth, “ *Messiah is come in the flesh,* ” superadded to the jewish gospel, has enlarged the heart of all the disciples of John, or the *babes in Christ*. And these truths, “ *Christ died for my sins and rose again for my justification ; He is ascended up on high : He has received the gift of the Spirit for men—for me. I believe on him by the power of that Spirit. He dwells in my heart by faith. He is* ” in

in me the hope of glory. The Promise of the Father is fulfilled : the kingdom of God, [righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost] is come with power : — these richer truths, I say, superadded to those, which are essential to the inferior dispensations, tincture the hearts of all *adult christians*, and make them more or less intimately one with Christ, according to the degree of their faith, and the influences of his spirit.

The field of Truth is as boundless as the divine perfections : and the treasures it contains, are as unsearchable as the riches of Christ. Here we may literally say, *Deep calleth unto deep—Canst thou by searching find out the Almighty to perfection ? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do ? deeper than hell, what canst thou know ?* These three capital Truths only, *God is — God is love — God is mine in Christ*, are more than sufficient to replace my soul in paradise. I know but little of them ; and yet, thanks be to God ! I know enough to make me anticipate heavenly bliss ; nor is it the least part of my present happiness, to rejoice that there is an eternity before me to unfold the wonders of TRUTH, and to explore *the mystery of God*. *Now I see thro' a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known.*

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S E C T I O N VI.

Saving Faith is more particularly described by its rise and operations ; and distinguished from the faith of trembling devils, immoral antinomians, penitents sold under sin, and modish professors, who believe without frame and feeling.

IF we assent to a religious truth, merely because we cannot resist its evidence—if we hate it ; wanting to shake it off, wishing it were a lie, and fretting because

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cause we cannot make it so ; we have the faith of devils : for *devils believe and tremble* ; the force of the awful truths, which they cannot deny, giving them a foretaste of infernal torments. Of this sort, it seems, was the faith of Felix, when St. Paul *reasoned* before him of *justice, temperance, and judgment to come*. This alarming doctrine, supported by the suffrage of conscience, and impressed by *the Spirit of truth*, made the noble heathen tremble : but, soon recovering himself, he fought against the truth, that had laid hold of him unawares ; and he kept it at arm's length, till he could shake it off, as the apostle did the viper that fastened on his hand ; or, at least, till he could run away from it, by plunging as desperately into a sea of sensual delights, as the devils in the swine did into the sea of Galilee.

The faith of immoral professors is not much better than the faith of Felix and Satan. They believe *some* glorious truths, but not with the heart to righteousness. Two or three comparisons may help us to understand this *mystery of iniquity*. When a person visits you, you may either receive him with cold civility, as a stranger ; or embrace him with warm affection, as a bosom-friend. From secret motives you may even show a peculiar regard to a man, whom you secretly despise or detest. He has a good voice, you love music, and he ministers to your amusement : Perhaps you want him to cloke the sin of his Bathsheba ; perhaps you are a party-man ; he is a proper tool for you ; and therefore you make much of him. But while your regard for him springs merely from such external circumstances, can it ever be personal and sincere ? Equally ungenerous however is the regard that Gallio and Fulsome have for the truth. Gallio holds fast the doctrine of general redemption, because he fondly supposes, that he has only to avoid robbery and murder to go to heaven : Fulsome extols "everlasting love,"—but it is because he thinks, that it gives him the liberty of loving the world, without the least danger of losing God's eternal favour. He embraces
"justification

" justification by faith alone ; " but it is because he confounds *the works of faith* and *the works of the law*; and vainly hopes to be finally justified without either. He shouts " free grace " for ever, because it ensures, as he thinks, his eternal salvation, whatever length he may go in sin. He is a partial anatomist : he dissects the body of truth, throws away the vitals, and only preserves those parts, which seem to countenance his immoral scheme. I question if an Indian warrior is fonder of the scalp of an Englishman, than *Gallio* is of the doctrine of " God's mercy " separated from God's holiness and justice ; or *Fulsome*, of the doctrine of " Christ's merits," torn away from the evangelical worthiness of sincere obedience.

Nay, a judicious gnostick may admire and espouse a well-connected system of religious truth, just as a virtuoso admires and purchases a good collection of shells. The virtuoso contends for the beauty and rarity of his marine toys, with as much passionateness as if they were parts of himself ; but they only lie upon cotton in his drawers, far enough from his breast : And the gnostick disputes for the truths he has taken a fancy to, with as much warmth as if they were incorporated with himself ; but, he contrives that they shall pass like flying clouds over his understanding, without descending in fruitful showers upon his heart.

Truth is the wholesome food of souls : hence it is said, *The just shall live by his faith*, by his receiving Christ in the word of Truth, and by mystically feeding upon him, according to these deep words : *Except you eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you* ; or as St. John expresses it, *The TRUTH is not in you*. Now, as food must be inwardly taken, and properly digested, before it can nourish us ; so must truth. If men therefore, who *buy the truth* in theory and *sell it* in practice, who *profess it in words* and *deny it in works*, have not power to take up their cross, and to follow Christ ; we ought no more on that account to conclude, that the truth is inefficacious to our salvation ;

tion; than to suppose, that good food is improper for our nourishment, because men, that spend their time in preparing it for others, in drawing up bills of fare, in placing dishes to the best advantage, and in inviting others to eat heartily, while they live upon trash themselves, have not strength to go through an hard day's work.

Again, from such scriptures as these, *I will HEAL their backslidings — HEAL my soul for I have sinned against thee — God shall send forth his MERCY and his TRUTH — he sent his WORD and HEALED them,* &c it is evident, that evangelical truth is, next to Christ, the MEDICINE as well as the *food* of souls. Now as it is absurd to suppose, that speculating upon a medicine, instead of taking it, can conduce to the recovery of our bodily health; so it is unreasonable to fancy, that bare speculating upon the doctrines of the gospel, can be productive of saving health; cordial believing having no less necessary a reference to truth, than real drinking to a potion. Hence appears the necessity of clearly distinguishing between saving faith and antinomian fancy:—between the faith, by which a man fervently believes with an humbled heart unto righteousness; and its counterfeit, by which a man idly believes with a conceited brain to *practical* antinomianism, whether he be a follower of Mr. Wesley or of Mr. Romaine.

The soaring faith of an immoral antinomian is far inferior to the abortive faith of an imperfect penitent, and even to *doubting*. When truth and error present themselves to our mind together [as they always do in every *trial of faith*] so long as we remain in suspense between them, we continue in the uneasy state between faith and unbelief, which we call *doubting*. But when truth appears more *beautiful* than error to the eye of our *understanding*, without appearing *good* enough prevalently to engage our *affections*; we are in the uncomfortable state of the carnal penitent, whom St. Paul describes in his own person, Rom. vii. We *approve* the revealed will of God, and *delight in his law after the inward man*. If the celestial rose were

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not beset with thorns, we would instantly gather it. If we had no bodily appetites to resist, no shameful cross to take up, no false wisdom to part with, we would heartily believe, and *work the work of God* : But we cannot yet give up our bosom-sin ; carnal reason and the flesh prevail still against the spirit, tho' not without a struggle ; unbelief and abortive faith (if I may use the expression) wrestling in our distracted breasts, as Esau and Jacob did in Rebecca's womb ; and making us complain, *The good that I would do, if it cost me nothing, I do not : But the evil I would not, that I do*, because it gratifies my fallen nature. Thus with his mind, his rational powers, the carnal penitent serves the law of God, by good, tho' ineffectual resolutions ; but with his flesh, his carnal appetites, he serves the law of sin, by bad, tho' lamented performances.

Here I beg leave to account for the famous confession of the princess, who cries out in Ovid : † *Video meliora proboque, — Deteriora sequor* ; which may be thus paraphrased : ' I stand between the rough, steep, ascending path of virtue (*bonum honestum* ;) and the plain flowry, downward road of vice (*bonum jucundum*.) Conscience says, that the one is far more commendable ; passion declares, that the other is far more pleasing. I madly give the casting vote to hurrying passion : it decides, that the pleasure of a present, certain gratification, be it ever so sinful, overbalances the fear of a future, uncertain punishment, be it ever so terrible ; and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of my conscience, I submit to the hazardous decision of my appetite, secretly hoping, that God does not regard my crimes, or that a day of retribution is a chimera.' ‡

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† I see what is right and approve it, but do what is wrong.

‡ Had Medea been acquainted with what passes for " Gospel " in our days, she might have added to her delusive dreams, the horrid hope of " singing louder to all eternity in heaven for her grievous falls." But, tho' she was an heathen, and a lewd, bloody witch, I believe, that she would have disapproved the indecent, exorbitant height, to which some of our gospel-preachers carry antinomianism.

To return : Faith does not struggle into birth without her coeval child and constant partner, *Hope*. When Faith fails, despair groans, *O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me ?* But when faith revives, hope lifts up her head, and cries, *I thank God, there is deliverance thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.* Thus we go on falling and rising, conceiving and miscarrying, dying and reviving, till we are quite tired of the sins, which hinder us from welcoming the saving truth with a more cordial embrace ; and when we do this, our faith is unfeigned ; the Lord sets to it the broad seal of his power ; it proves victorious ; we enter into gospel-liberty, and instead of the old note, *Who shall deliver me ?* we sing, [under the christian dispensation] *Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law of sin, as well as from the curse of the law of innocence, and of the ceremonial law. There is no condemnation to them that believe, and WALK not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*

The manner, in which this deliverance is generally wrought, may be more particularly described thus. Free grace, at sundry times and in divers manners, speaks to our consciences ; recommending and enforcing the word nigh, the commandment that is everlasting life, the Truth that contains the regenerating power of God. If it is the day of provocation, we unnecessarily begin to make excuse : We CANNOT come to the marriage feast : We are either too good, too bad, or too busy to entertain the Truth ; and we say as civilly as Felix, *Go thy way for this time, when I shall be fitter, or when I shall have a more convenient season, I will call for thee.* Perhaps we pertinaciously harden our hearts, contradicting, blaspheming, and saying as the pharisees, *We will not have this Truth to reign over us : away with it !* But if it is the day of conversion, if our free-willing soul knows the time of her visitation ; humbly bowing at the word of the Lord, and saying as the Virgin Mary, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy WORD ;* I am a lost sinner, but there is mercy with thee that thou mayst be feared : then the seed of the kingdom, the word of God, is received in an honest

honest and good heart ; for nothing is wanting to render the heart initially good and honest, but the sincere submission of our free will to that free grace, which courts us and says : *Behold ! I stand at the door of every heart and knock : if ANY MAN hear my voice and open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me : He shall taste how good the Lord is, he shall taste the good word of God, and the powers of truth, which are the powers of the world to come : and so shall he rise superior to shadows and lies, which are the powers of this present evil world.*

Thus opens the kingdom of God in the believing soul : thus is Christ, *the truth, and the life*, formed in the heart by faith : Thus grace begins to REIGN thro' righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ : — Thus the little *leaven of sincerity and truth* prevalently leavens the whole soul with righteousness and true holiness : Thus, after hard labour, the soul, impregnated by truth, brings forth thro' grace the living, saving, *operative* faith, that actually overcomes the world.

I call that faith *saving* and *OPERATIVE*, because, so long as it lives, it *saves* ; and so long as it saves, it *WORKS righteousness*—it *WORKS* by a righteous fear of the evil denounced against sin ; by a righteous opposition to every known sin ; by a righteous hope of the good promised to obedience ; and by a righteous love of the truth that has produced it, and of the Father of lights from whom that truth proceeds ; it being scarcely possible to welcome heartily a beam of the sun for its brightness, without *indirectly* welcoming the sun itself. Therefore, when living faith ceases to *work*, it dies away, as the heart that ceases to beat ; it goes out, as a candle that ceases to shine.

“ But, upon this footing, what becomes of the
 “ modish doctrine of a faith without frame and feel-
 “ ing.” — If the ministers, who recommend such a
 faith, mean that we must set our heart, as a seal, to
 the gospel truths adapted to our present state, and
 stamp them with all our might ; not considering whe-
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ther our *fallen* nature and *carnal* reason relish them, and steadily following the poet's direction :

Tu ne cede malis ; sed contra audentior ito,
Quàm mala te natura finit :

they maintain a truth, a great truth, which cannot be too much urged upon tempted, desponding, and despairing souls. — But if they mean, that we must believe ourselves unconditionally elected to glory, be the *frame* of our minds ever so carnal, and the *feelings* of our hearts ever so worldly, they destroy *the health of the daughter of God's people*, with as rank poison as ever grew in spiritual Egypt. I am no judge of what passes in the breast of those gentlemen ; but, for my part, I never *FEEL faith* more strongly at work, than when I wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with the banded powers of darkness.

None but a dead, mouldered man is quite destitute of “ frame and feeling : ” It is not a *real* flame that neither warms in winter, nor shines in the dark. The moment a light is not, in its degree, able to triumph over darkness, and even to turn it into light, it ceases to be a *true* light. You may see in Windsor-castle a candle most exquisitely painted ; it *shines* as steadfastly as Mr. Fulsome *believes*. Was the coloured canvas as loquacious as that antinomian hero, it might say, “ I shine without feeling, tho' not without a frame ; ” but even then, Mr. Fulsome's faith would have the pre-eminence ; for, if we credit him, it shines, without either “ frame or feeling.” How absurd is solifidianism ! how dangerous ! if any man can shew me a true light, that *actually* emits no beams, I will repent of the ridicule I cast upon the dotages, which make way for a “ justifying faith ” that works by adultery and murder ; an ill-smelling candle this, which burns in the breasts of apostates, to the honour of him, that kindled it at the fire of tophet — an infernal candle, sending forth darkness instead of light, and so far benighting the good men, who follow it, that they look
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upon it as the inextinguishable *candle of the Lord*, and upon "sincere obedience" as a "*jack o' lanthorn*."

The preceding pages represent Truth as the remedy and nourishment of our souls, and I have already observed, that, as we cannot take food without the continual help of the God of nature ; so we cannot receive the truth without the continual assistance of the God of grace ; it being the first axiom of the gospel, that all our sufficiency and ability to do any good are of God ; nevertheless, lest those, who seek occasion against the truth, which they do not relish, should call the *free grace*, I hold forth, *pelagianism* ; I shall conclude this section by asserting, that if Christ were not *the Saviour of all men*, and if we were entirely destitute of the gracious, evangelical *light, that enlightens every man, and helps our infirmities*, we should be, with respect to saving truths, like people, who either have no kind of food, or no stomach at all to their food ; nay, like sick people, that have an *insurmountable aversion* to a medicine, and an *irresistible* longing for poison. But, *the saving grace of God having appeared to all men*, and having mercifully given us an evangelical capacity to receive the truth, as it is revealed to us in the dispensation we are under ; we may either *put* that truth *from us*, as the unbelieving Jews did, or welcome it as Job and his friends ; altho' not without difficulty — Yea, such difficulty as forms *the trial of our faith*, and makes it reasonable in God, to bid us *chuse life* rather than death, when truth and error, blessing and cursing are set before us.

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S E C T I O N VII.

The operative belief of the truth, and the operative belief of a lie, are the two roots that produce all our GOOD and all our BAD actions. An appeal to reason and matter of fact. Our internal and [when we do not play the hypocrites] our external works are always exactly like our faith; our actions being as much produced by our faith, as our pulses are by the beating of our heart.

NO plant can grow without its root, and no moral action can spring into existence without its principle. When we do not dissemble, our principle of action is our *prevalent persuasion* — our *predominant belief*; a cordial, practical *belief of the truth* and rejection of a lie, being always the principle of a good action; and a cordial, practical *belief of a lie* and rejection of the truth, being always the principle of a bad action.

That good works can have no origin but the *belief of the truth*, will appear indubitable, if we trace them back to their source. To *fear, love, and obey* God, are undoubtedly GOOD works; but can I do them, without BELIEVING the TRUTH — i. e. without believing that God is, that he is to be feared, loved, and obeyed; and that it is my duty or privilege so to do? Again, that bad works can have no other origin but the *belief of a lie*, will also appear evident, if we follow them to their spring. To *neglect and disobey* God are certainly BAD works; but can we do them without *believing a lie*? Without being more or less persuaded, that, altho' it may not be our duty, yet upon the whole, in our present circumstances, it will be for our advantage or credit, to *neglect* God, and to swim with the stream?

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May not the preceding argument concerning the *importance of faith*, be confirmed by appeals to reason, experience, and matter of fact? Did not Eve stand in paradise, so long as she forbore eating of the forbidden fruit? Did she not forbear eating, so long as she *believed* the truth — i. e. so long as she believed, she should die if she ate of that fruit? Would she have sinned, if she had not first believed a lie, yea, swallowed down a cluster of lies? ‘She should not die — the fruit was as good as it was fair — it was to be desired to make one wise — she should be as God, &c.’ — Was it not those untruths, freely entertained in her heart, that made her commit the direful deed?

Why did Judas once forsake all to follow the indigent Jesus? Was it not because he *believed* it his real advantage so to do? And did he not, so far, believe the *truth*, and show his faith by corresponding works? By and by the spirit of error suggested, that he should be a loser by following, and a gainer by betraying his master? Was not this an infamous *lie*? When he had believed it, did not his heart become a nest for the old Serpent, a throne for the father of lies? And did not our Lord speak the words of soberness and truth, when he said to his disciples, *One of you hath a devil*?

Why did Peter deny his dear Lord? Undoubtedly because in that fatal hour he *believed*, that the Jews were more able and ready to fall upon and destroy him, than Christ was to save and defend him. And was not this believing an untruth? When he had compleated his crime, why did he go out to weep, and not to hang himself like Judas? Was it not because he admitted the truth again; believing, that where sin had abounded, grace might yet superabound; and that great as his crimes were, God’s mercy and Christ’s love were yet greater? — Saving truths these, which Judas could no longer believe, having *done FINAL despite to the spirit of TRUTH, the spirit of FAITH*, who leads, not drags into the truth, who teaches, not forces sinners in the way of faith.

Why did David attack Goliath with undaunted courage? Was it not because he heartily *believed*, that

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the Lord would not be insulted by that blaspheming monster, and would stand by any one that attacked him in the name of the God of Israel ? A great truth this, thro' which he waxed valiant in fight, killed his gigantic adversary, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. — Why did he afterwards stain his righteous soul with atrocious crimes ? Was it not because he practically, and therefore most cordially believed an horrid untruth : namely, that the company of his neighbour's Ewe-lamb was preferable to the delights afforded by the Lamb of God ? — Why did he afterwards repent ? Was it not because he received the truth again ; heartily believing, that he had committed dreadful sins, and that he must repent or perish ?

Again : Why are men lovers of the world more than lovers of God ? Is it not because they really *believe*, that the world can make them happier than God ? — If I say, “ I *believe* that God is preferable to the world,” and do not seek my chief happiness in him, do not I deceive myself, and tell a gross untruth ? And while St. James charges me to show my faith by my works, does not St. John show himself a rational divine, when he protests, that I am a LIAR, and that *the TRUTH is not in me* ? Once more : Why did Saul of Tarsus, *breathe threatnings and slaughter* against Christ's members ? Was it not because he *believed* the grand lie of his day, i. e. that Christ was an impostor ? And why did he afterwards breathe nothing but fervent love to christians, and unextinguishable zeal for Christ's glory ? Was it not because his inmost soul was penetrated with the force of this almighty truth, Christ is the true Messiah ; he loved me, and gave himself for me ?

From these, and a thousand such observations upon the *conversion* of sinners, and the *perversion* of saints, I draw the following consequences, which, I trust, will recommend themselves to the reason of every calm enquirer after truth.

(1) To convert or pervert a man, you need only change his principle of action, his predominant practical

tical belief of a damnable lie, or of a saving truth. For if the spring is new, so undoubtedly will be the streams. If you have a new tree, you will infallibly have new fruit. If the rudder is truly turned, the ship will certainly take a new course.

(2) *Truth* is the heavenly seed, that produces living faith; and living faith is the heavenly root, that produces good works. *Truth* and *faith* therefore, are at the bottom of every good work. To suppose them absent from a good work, is to suppose that a good work can be void of *sincerity* and *truth*, and of course void of *goodness*. And is not this supposing a glaring absurdity? On the other hand, a *lie* is the hellish seed, that produces *unbelief*; and *unbelief* is the hellish root that produces bad works. A *lie* and *unbelief* are then at the bottom of every bad work. To suppose them absent from a bad work, is to suppose that a bad work can be wrought in *faith* and in *truth*, which is as impossible as to do a good work in *malice* and *wickedness*.

(3) As the rise and fall of a good weather-glass infallibly shows the real, tho' as yet invisible alterations of the atmosphere: so our rising from sin and our falling into sin surely evidence the secret, and perhaps unnoticed changes that happen in our faith for the better or for the worse; the whole of our words and actions, taken in connection with our views and tempers, being the certain result of our present faith or unbelief, and consequently the best marks that we please or displease God, according to the last and capital proposition of the Minutes.

(4) When there is *truth* in the inward parts, there is *Faith* also; it being as impossible to admit religious *Truths* any other way but by *faith*, as it is to partake of the *light* any other way but by *sight*. *Truth* and *faith* tincture with goodness the most extraordinary actions. Thus Samuel cuts Agag in pieces before the Lord, St. Paul strikes Elymas with blindness, St. Peter strikes Ananias with sudden death, Phineas runs Zimri and Cosby thro' the body, Abraham offers Isaac in *truth* and *faith*; and God counts it to them for righteousness

zealousness to all generations for evermore. On the other hand, the actions, that do not spring from *truth* and *faith*, be they ever so good in the eyes of men, are an abomination in the sight of God, who *requires TRUTH in the inward parts* : Thus king Saul offers a sacrifice, Judas pleads for the poor, the pharisees make long prayers, Pilate washes his hands from the blood of Christ ; and God reckons it to them for sin to all generations for evermore.

(5) Some actions, such as the commission of wanton adultery, and of treacherous murder, can never be tinged by truth and faith, because they have for their principle triumphant impurity, gross injustice, and flagrant unbelief ; and whenever such sins prevail in the soul, the contrary virtues, holiness, truth, and faith are gone ; just as when racking pains and a putrid fever prevail in the body, ease and health are there no more. To suppose therefore, that living faith lurked in David's heart during his grievous apostacy, is as absurd as to suppose that health lurks in a body infected by the plague, and life in a corpse. " Ay, but David's faith, like that of Peter, was raised up again : " True ; and so was the body of Lazarus, that of our Lord, and that of the Ruler's daughter : but is this a proof, that Lazarus, Christ, and the damsel [who, it seems, had been dead but a few minutes] did not undergo a real death ? A concession however I cheerfully make to my objector ; wishing, that it may be a means of reconciling him as much to the faith of St. James, as I am reconciled to that of St. Paul. If he grants me, that Peter's and David's faith went out as really as a candle, which is put under an extinguisher ; I will grant him, that, thro' the long-suffering of God, who never seals the *absolute* reprobation of sinners so long as their day of visitation lasts, the extinct faith of those fallen saints was as an extinguished light, that continues to smoke, and can the sooner be lighted again. Their falls, great as they were, did not amount to complete obduracy and the sin against the Holy Ghost. *He will not quench the smoking*

Smoking flax, was a promise, in which they were still interested, with all those who have not yet *done final despite to the spirit of grace*. Free grace therefore visited them again ; and when she put her candle to their hearts, they again knew their day ; they welcomed the light ; the smoking flax once more caught the pure flame of truth ; and living faith, with her luminous train, was rekindled in their breasts. Thus, by improving the rest of the accepted time, they escaped the fate of Judas, who so hardened himself, that his candle was put out in final darkness ; they avoided the doom of the foolish virgins, who so procrastinated repentance, that their extinguished lamps were never lighted again. To return :

(6) As our pulses all over the body exactly answer to the beating of our heart ; so *our INWARD works*, that is, our thoughts, desires, schemes, and tempers, exactly answer to our faith or principle of action. I say *our INWARD works*, because hypocrites can mimic all *external works*. How improperly then is St. Paul quoted against the works of faith ? Does he not assure us himself, that *saving faith worketh by love* ? And is it not as absurd to oppose the *works* of faith to *faith*, as to oppose the pulses to the beating of the heart ; nothing in the world being more strongly connected ? However, as the heart always beats before the arteries ; and as a cannon is always fired before the explosion can be heard, the ball felt, or the flame perceived : so faith always moves before it can set fear, hope, desire, or love in motion. And if godly fear, hope, desire, and love, which are our *internal* good works, always spring from FAITH ; our *external* good works, such as publicly worshipping God, doing good to our neighbour, &c. from a right principle, and in a right manner, always flow from FAITH also : For our external works are nothing but the effects of the works, which we have already wrought in our hearts ; just as the rapid motion of a ball out of the cannon, is nothing but the effect of the motion, that was communicated to it, while it was yet in the cannon.

(7) If every internal good work (suppose a sincere *operative* desire to love my enemy for God's sake) necessarily springs from a *good* principle, that is, from true faith; it follows, that so long as I consistently continue in the same disposition, my principle of action is good, and I am (so far) a *good* man, according to the standard of one or another of the gospel-dispensations. On the other hand, if any one inward, bad work (suppose a malicious desire to hurt my neighbour) springs from a *bad* principle, it follows also, that so long as I continue in that bad disposition, what ever degree of sanctity I may pretend to, my principle of action is *bad*, I am a *wicked* man of the pharisaic or of the antinomian order.—To conclude:

(8) As by suppressing the beating of the heart, you may stop all the pulses; so by suppressing the act of faith, you may put a stop to all good works. On the other hand, as by cutting the main arteries you may put an end to the motion of the heart: so, by suppressing the good motions caused by faith, you may put an end to the life of faith, and destroy the new creature in Christ Jesus.

* * * * *

S E C T I O N VIII.

The REASONABLENESS of the doctrine of salvation by faith is farther evinced by a variety of arguments.—How much we are indebted to the Solifidians, for having firmly stood up in defence of FAITH: How dearly they have made us pay for that service, when they have so enforced our xith article, which guards salvation by faith, as to make void the xiiith, which guards morality. — And why the overpowering splendor of TRUTH is qualified by some shades.

SHOULD some readers still think, that it is unreasonable to dwell *first* upon faith, and to insist *more* upon it than upon the other works and graces, which adorn

adorn the life and character of a christian ; to remove their scruples, and to vindicate more fully the fundamental doctrine of *salvation by faith*, I present them with the following remarks.

(1) If true *Faith* is the root that produces hope, charity, and sincere obedience, as the preceding section evinces, is it not reasonable *principally* to urge the necessity of *believing aright* ? The end of all preaching is undoubtedly to plant the tree of evangelical obedience ; and how can that tree be planted, but by its *root* ? Was a gardener ever charged with unreasonableness, for not setting a tree by the branches ?

(2) If *faith working by love* is the *heart* of true religion, should we not bestow our chief attention and care upon it ? Suppose you were a physician, and attended a patient, who had an impostume in his stomach and another on his hand ; would you do honour to your skill, if overlooking the internal mischief, you confined your attention to the external ulcer ?

(3) The most excellent gift of God to man, next to the invaluable gifts of his Son and Spirit, is that of the saving *Truth*. Nay, the Son of God, in his prophetic character, came only to display the *Truth*. He was manifested in the flesh to be its herald among men. St. Paul tells us, that *Christ witnessed a good confession before Pilate* ; and St. John informs us, that part of this *good confession* ran thus : *To THIS END was I born, and for THIS CAUSE came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto THE TRUTH*. Now, if *bearing witness to the TRUTH* was a great cause, and a peculiar end of our Lord's coming into the world ; if the Spirit itself is called *the Spirit of truth*, because his grand office is to reveal and seal the *truth* ; if *truth* is no better than error to us, till we receive it by *faith* ; and if the scripture declares four times, that *The just shall LIVE by his FAITH*, a declaration this, which St. Paul confirms by his own experience, when he says, *I LIVE by FAITH* ; is it not evident, that when we practically reject the doctrine of *faith*, we reject *life*, together with all the blessings which are brought to light
by

by the gospel; a gospel *disbelieved* being undoubtedly a gospel **REJECTED**.

(4) Our feelings and conduct greatly depend upon our apprehensions of things. A *false* report that your son is dead reaches your ears; you *believe* it, and pangs of grief distract your breast. Soon after a *true* account of his being drowned is brought to you; you *disbelieve* it, and you remain unaffected.—A diamond by moon-light glitters at your feet; you think, it is only a glow-worm, and this mistake prevents your stooping to pick it up. A glow-worm shines at some distance; you fancy, that it is a diamond, and you run to it with a degree of hope and joy proportionable to the degree of your vain confidence. The God of truth is an infinite, spiritual diamond, if I may use the expression; and yet, so faint are our ideas of his excellence, that we overlook him, and madly run after deceitful objects, the brightest of which are but glow-worms to the *Father of lights*. Nothing therefore but a firm *belief of the truth*, stamping our souls with just apprehensions of things, and fixing in us a strong persuasion of their intrinsic worth or vanity, can rectify our judgment, and make us *regulate* our conduct according to the dictates of God's word, which are invariably one with the truth, and with the nature of things.

(5) When St. Paul exhorts his converts to the pursuit of things *honest, just, pure, lovely, &c.* he mentions *first* with great propriety *whatsoever things are true*. For, as soon as obedient *faith* allows *Truth* to sit upon the throne, there is an end of mental anarchy: All things resume their proper ranks and places. Creatures in a great degree disappear before their Creator; earth, before heaven; and time, before eternity. Thus Satan's charm is broken; God begins to be to us, what he is in himself, *all in all*; and when we *see* him such, if our faith is lively and practical, we *treat* him as such: We answer the end of our creation: Truth prevails: *Satan falls as lightning from heaven*: Man is man; and God is God.

(6) If

(6) If *truth*, next to God, is the most powerful thing in the world : if we can have no communion with God, but by the medium of *truth* : if *falsehood* is the rankest poison in hell ; and if we take a draught of this poison, as often as we take in a capital religious error ; can you reasonably explode the doctrine of *salvation by faith*, since the office of living *faith* is to expel the poison of destructive error, and to receive the reviving, healing, strengthening cordial of gospel-truth?

(7) If an *unfeigned faith* in the Truths, which God reveals under one or an other of his evangelical dispensations, is the instrumental cause of all our good works ; whilst a cordial consent to one or more of Satan's lies, is the parent of all our bad actions :—if these two springs move every wheel of righteousness and of iniquity in the world ; is it not highly consistent with reason to mind them *first* ? Would you not pity your watch-maker, if he so regarded the hand and dial-plate of your watch, as to forget the wheel-work and spring ? And can you approve the method of *Honestus*, who insists upon good works, without ever touching upon the *principles* of sincere obedience, and upon *faith*, which is the spring, that sets all in motion.

(8) Again, if Abraham, by *not staggering at the promise of God thro' UNBELIEF*, and by *being strong in FAITH*, gave glory to God, and did set to his seal that God is true :—if you cannot honour a superior more, than by receiving his every word with respectful confidence, and moving at his every beck with obedient alacrity :—and if *faith* thus honours God, why should you refuse it the first place among the graces, which support and adorn the church *militant* ? Especially since the Lord declares, that *the PURE in HEART shall see God*, and that our *HEARTS are PURIFIED by FAITH* ?—And since the scriptures testify, that *without HOLINESS no man shall see the Lord*, and that we are *SANCTIFIED thro' FAITH that is in him* ?

(9) All fulness dwells in God : creatures abstracted from the divine plenitude are mere emptiness. Rational creatures, in their most perfect state, are only *moral*

ral vessels filled with the grace of God, and reflecting the light of divine truth. Now if we can be saved any other way but *by grace thro' obedient faith*, i. e. by *freely receiving* the grace and light of God, thro' the practical belief of the truth proposed to us : — if we are in any degree saved by our *proper* merit thro' *faithless* works ; we may indulge pharisaic boasting. But, God does not so give his glory to human worms : therefore such a *boasting is excluded by the law of faith* ; and the apostle wisely observes, that *salvation is of FAITH, that it might be by GRACE* ; the justifying *faith* of sinners always implying a cordial acknowledgment of their sin and misery, and an hearty recourse to the *tender mercy of our God whereby the day-spring from on high has visited us* † more or less clearly, according to the dispensation we are under.

(10) The

† To establish the doctrine of the gospel-dispensations, to show that saving truth, in its various manifestations, is the object of saving faith, I need only prove, that a man, in order to his salvation, is bound to believe at one time, what he was not bound to believe at another. Take one instance out of many. If St. Peter had died just after he had been pronounced *blessed* for acknowledging, that our Lord was *the Son of God*, he could not have been *curst* with a “ *Depart from me,*” &c. he would have been *saved* : and, in that case, he would have obtained salvation without believing one tittle about our Lord's *resurrection* ; [might I not also say, about his *crucifixion* ? See note 13, p. 43] and nevertheless St. Paul, a few years after, justly represented *that* article as essential to the *salvation* of those, to whom it is revealed : *IF thou shalt BELIEVE with thy heart, that God hath RAISED the Lord Jesus from the dead, thou shalt be SAVED*, Rom. x. 9. — Few people, I think, can read the acts of the apostles, without seeing, that the numerous conversions wrought by St. Peter's preaching, were wrought by the force of this truth, “ *God has raised up that Jesus, whom you have crucified :*” A victorious truth this, which would have been a gross *untruth* three months before the day of pentecost. — Nay, what is at one time an article of *saving* faith, may at an other time become an article of the most confirmed unbelief : Thus, the expectation of the Messiah, which was a capital article of the faith of the ancient Israelites, is now the buttress of the babel of modern Jews. The property of faith is then to make our hearts bow to the truth, as it is manifested to us ; it being evident, that God never blamed the children of men, for not believing what was never revealed to them.

MEMO-

(10) The manner in which *faith* and its works *exclude boasting*, may be illustrated by a comparison. A beggar lies dying at your door, you offer him a cordial, he takes it, revives, and works. — A deserter is going to be shot, you bring him a pardon from the king, if he will receive it with grateful humility, he does so, joins his regiment, and fights with such courage that he is promoted. Now in these cases it is evident, that *pharisaic* † *boasting* is excluded. If the beggar lives ever so long, and works ever so hard—if the deserter fights ever so manfully and is raised ever so high; yet, they can never say, that *their doings* have procured them the life, which they enjoy; for, before they did such works, that life was graciously given, or restored to them, upon the easy terms of confidently taking a remedy, and humbly accepting a pardon offered. The application is easy: By our fallen nature we are *conceived in sin, and children of wrath*: God freely gives us the light of life in Jesus Christ; *faith* without necessity humbly receives it, and works by it; the believer therefore, can never be so unreasonable, and ungrateful, as to suppose, that his working merited him *the light of life*, by which he began to work righteousness: so long as he deserves the name of a believer, he knows, he feels, that his *faith* is in the FIRST place a *mere receiver*. *What hast thou, that thou hast*

MEMORANDUM.] At the bottom of page 162, I have said, that “The genuine seed of the word is *always* good, *always* full of divine energy.” I desire the candid reader to read the following lines as more particularly-expressive of my meaning.

The word is *Truth*; and *Truth*, like the sun, is *always* efficacious where its light penetrates. But I would by no means insinuate, that the truth may not, like the sun, shine more brightly and powerfully at one time, than at another; The word of truth, however, always performs (tho’ more or less sensibly) that whereunto God sends it; being always a *savour of life unto life to them that believe*, or of *death unto death to wilful unbelievers*, according to the grand decree of conditional election and reprobation, *He that believeth, &c. shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*.

† There is an *evangelical boasting*, which St. Paul recommends to others, and indulges himself: See the note, page 117.

hast not received, roars like thunder in the ears of a lively faith, and like lightning strikes dead the *pharisaic* boast.

(11) I say, that faith is in the FIRST place a *mere receiver* : this deserves attention. If we consider faith as a conduit-pipe, which at one end receives the truth and power of God, and at the other end refunds those living streams to water the garden of the Lord ; we may with propriety compare that mother-grace to the pipe of a watering pot, which, at the internal, unseen opening receives the water that is in the pot ; and at the external, visible perforations returns it, and forms artificial showers over the drooping plants. According to the doctrine of *grace*, maintained by the Solifidians, faith does nothing but *receive* the grace of God thro' Christ ; and according to the doctrine of *works*, maintained by the moralists, faith is a mere *bestower* : but, according to the gospel of Christ, which embraces and connects the two extremes of truth, Faith is *first* an humble, passive *receiver*, and *then* a chearful active *bestower* : It receives grace and truth, and returns love and good works. In that respect it resembles the heart, which continually receives the blood from the veins, and returns it into the arteries. If the heart ceases either to *receive*, or to *return* the blood (no matter which) its motion and our animal life are soon at an end : and if faith ceases either to receive grace, or to return good works, its motion and its life soon terminate in spiritual death, according to the doctrine of St. James. If the Solifidians and moralists candidly looked at faith in this rational and scriptural light, they would soon embrace the whole gospel, and one another. By considering *faith* as a RECEIVER [according to the first gospel axiom] Honestus would avoid the *pharisaic* extreme ; and by viewing it as a BESTOWER, [according to the second gospel-axiom] Zelotes would avoid the antinomian delusion ; and both would jointly recommend the humble, chearful, consistent *passiveness* and *activity* of bible-believers.

(12) *If*

(12) *If we receive the witness of men, says St. John, the witness of God is greater : for, under the christian dispensation, this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son : He that believeth on the Son of God hath the testimony in himself : but he that believeth not God, hath MADE HIM A LIAR, because he believeth not the record, that God gave of his Son.* Upon these awful words I raise the following argument. If a state of absolute doubt is quite unnatural : — if it is almost impossible to keep the balance of our judgment unturned for *one* hour, with respect to *all* saving truths and damning lies : — if the stream of life, which hurries us along, calls us every moment to action : — if we *continually* do good or bad works : — if good works certainly spring from saving *faith*, and bad works from destructive *unbelief* : — if skepticks are only so in imagination, theory, and profession : — if our daily *conduct* demonstrates whether our heart inclines most to the *lies* of Satan, or to the *truths* of God : — and if the moment we *practically* reject God's truths, we embrace the lies of the God of this world, and by that means take him for our God : — if, I say, this is the case, what reasonable man can be surprized to hear the mild Jesus say, *He that believeth not shall be damned*. Can there be a greater sin — a sin more productive of all iniquity, and more horrid, than to *make* the lying Devil a god, and the true God a liar ? Nevertheless, dreadful to say ! this double crime is actually committed by all, that make an act of wilful, practical unbelief ; and the commission of it is indirectly recommended by all those, who decry the doctrine of *salvation by faith*.

Lastly : If our first parents fell by BELIEVING the gross *lies* told them by the Serpent ; is God unreasonable to raise us by making us BELIEVE the great *truths* peculiar to our dispensation, that the divine *leaven of sincerity and truth* may counterwork, and at last expel the satanic *leaven of malice and wickedness* ? Who ever thought it absurd in a physician to proportion the remedy to the disease ; the antidote to the poison ?

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And

And why should even the incarnation of the Son of God, appear a means too wonderful for an end so important? If Apollyon, the Prince of darkness, had malice enough to incarnate himself, and assume the form of a *serpent* to deceive man; why should not the *Saviour of the world*, the healing antitype of the brazen serpent, incarnate himself also, and assume the form of a *man* to atone for, undeceive, and restore mankind? Why should not the living TRUTH, the seed of the woman, bruise the proud, lying Serpent's head with his celestial club, the humble, bloody cross? In a word, Why should it be thought incredible, that the Son of God, who, as our Creator, is far more nearly related to us than our natural parents, should have graciously stooped as low as the *human* nature to redeem us; when Satan wantonly stooped as low as the *heathen* nature to tempt us? On the contrary, is it not absurd to suppose, that hellish, wanton malice has done more to destroy, than heavenly, creating love to save the children of men? And is it not highly reasonable to believe, that an operative faith in divine truths, is as powerful a means of obedience and salvation, as an operative faith in satanic lies is of disobedience and damnation? For my part, the more I compare the genuine gospel with the nature of things, the more I admire their harmony; wondering equally at the prejudices of those hasty professors, who pour perpetual contempt upon reason, to keep their irrational opinions in countenance; and at the unreasonableness of those pretended votaries of reason, who suppose, that the doctrine of salvation by faith is incompatible with good sense.

“ But, [says an objector] if unfeigned faith in the light—if a cordial *belief of the truth* instrumentally turns us from the power of Satan to God; why have you published polemical tracts against the Solifidians, whose favourite doctrine is, *Believe:—he that believeth hath everlasting life?* ”

Ans. By the preceding pages it is evident, that we do not differ from the Solifidians when they preach
salvation

salvation by faith in a rational and scriptural manner. So long as they do this, we wish them good luck in the name of the Lord; and I once more offer them my despised pulpit to preach, that we are *saved by grace thro' faith, not of ourselves, it is the gift of God*; provided they will not oppose this doctrine to that of the apostle laid down in the *Scriptural Essay*. Nay, I do more. I publicly return them my sincere thanks for the bold stand they have made for *faith*, when the floods of pharisaic ungodliness lifted up their voice against that mother-grace, and threatened to destroy her with all her offspring. But alas! how dear have they made us pay for that service, when they have asserted, or insinuated, that true faith is inadmissible, that it can live in an heart totally depraved; that a man's faith can be good when his actions are bad, detestable, diabolical; in a word, that true christians may go any length in sin, may plunge into adultery, murder, or incest, and even proceed to the open worship of devils, like Solomon, without losing their title to a throne of glory, and their justifying, sanctifying, saving faith!

This they have done, in flat opposition to our Lord's doctrine: *A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: for every tree is known by its own fruit*, Luke vi. 43. — This they do still, in direct contrariety to conscience and experience, which agree to depose, that as we bow to the *Spirit of Truth* or to the *Spirit of error*, we become either *children of light* or *children of darkness*: — And this, some of them seem determined to do, to the stumbling of the judicious, the deceiving of the simple, and the hardening of infidels; notwithstanding our XIth article, which strongly guards the doctrine of faith against their solifidian error. — “*Good works*” [says our church in that truly anti-calvinistic article] “*do*” [at this present time] “*spring out* †

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NECES-

† Altho' good works spring out necessarily of a lively faith, yet a lively faith does not necessarily spring out of our hearts. I beg leave to explain

NECESSARILY of a true and lively faith" [and consequently bad works, of a false and dead faith:] "in so much that by them a LIVELY" [and by bad works a DEAD] "faith may" [at this present time] "be as evidently known, as a tree is discerned by the fruit."

But, in the mean time, how do they evade the force of that article? Why thus, David bears this year the fruit of adultery, hypocrisy, treachery, and murder, before all his kingdom: Last year he bore the fruit of chastity, sincerity, truth, and brotherly love. However, according to the Crispian doctrines of grace, David must be a tree of righteousness now, as much as when he bore the fruits of righteousness. If this is not the case, Mr. Falsome's gospel will be false. Now this must not be: *That* gospel must stand. — "But if it stands, our xanth article falls to the ground." — Oh! we can prop it up by saying, that tho' a child of God, a tree of righteousness, may now produce adultery, &c. &c. &c. yet he will certainly produce good fruit again *by and by*. To this salvo I answer, that the article has only two grand designs: the one inseparably to connect a *lively* faith and *good* works; and the other, to indicate the manner in which I may know whether I have a *lively* or a *dead* faith. Now if I may have a *lively* faith while I commit adultery, &c. &c. &c. it evidently follows: (1) That the *necessary* connexion between a *lively* faith and *good* works

is

explain this, and to secure the doctrine of *liberty* by one or two comparisons. When the queen had been pregnant a certain time, she *necessarily* bore the prince of Wales; but she did *not necessarily* conceive him; for she gave her hand *freely* to the king; yea, and when she had conceived the prince, she might have prevented his birth by procuring abortion.—Again: Altho' a ship is *necessarily* influenced by the rudder, yet the rudder is not *necessarily* influenced by the pilot. He is as free to move it to the left hand as to the right. This comparison is the best that occurs to my mind, and yet it is not entirely just; for, after all, a ship being an inanimate thing follows the motion of the rudder by *natural* necessity, but man being a *moral* agent has no *absolute* constraint laid upon him. The *necessity* by which good works follow a *lively* faith, is then rather a strong *moral* indispensableness, than a *natural* invincible necessity.

is totally lost : (2) That *adultery* and *murder* may denote a *lively* faith as well as *purity* and *love* : — And (3) That our *xii*th article has not even the worth of a nose of wax, and may be burned with St. James's epistle, as an article " of straw." And yet these gentlemen are the persons, that represent themselves as the only *fair* subscribers to our articles, and charge us with prevarication for taking the *xviii*th article in connexion with the *v*th, the *xii*th, the *xv*th and the *xxx*ist, as well as with the latter part of that article itself, which demand that the election it speaks of, be understood of *conditional* election !

To return : Should the reader object, that ' If God had suspended our salvation upon our *practical belief of the truth*, he would have put so conspicuous a badge upon the saving truth peculiar to each dispensation, that no body could have mistaken it for error, enthusiasm, priest-craft, or nonsense : ' I answer :

(1) God having decreed to prove the loyalty and moral sagacity of his rational creatures, could not but place them in such circumstances, in which they might have an opportunity of exerting themselves. If hares were chained at the doors of dogkennels, what sagacity could hounds manifest above mastives ? And if the deepest truths always lay within the reach of the most besotted souls, what advantage would candid diligent enquirers have over those, who wrap their minds in the veil of prejudice, and stupidly compose themselves to sleep in the arms of ignorance and sloth ?

(2) God will *reward* us according to our works of faith ; but if the truth were attended with an *irresistible* energy, if it shone *always* upon our minds as transcendently-bright, as the dazzling sun does sometimes upon our faces, would God display his wisdom in *rewarding* us for confessing it ? Did he, did any man in his senses ever offer to reward us for believing, that a bright luminary rules the day, when its meridian glory overpowers our sight ?

(3) An atmosphere surrounds the earth : a fecundine wraps the embryo : Rinds, husks, and shells defend all the fruits of the earth ; and why should not *truth*, that heavenly fruit, be also preserved in a proper envelope ? If the bottles that contain the most generous wines are not only corked, but sealed ; why should it be thought strange, that saving *truth*, the most powerful remedy and the richest cordial in the world, should in general require what I beg leave to call *uncorking* ?

(4) Pearls are found in the bottom of the sea : Gold and diamonds lie generally deep in the earth : We sink pits to a prodigious depth, only to come at the black mineral which we burn. Thousands of men go as far as the East and West Indies, to fill our canisters with tea and sugar. Our meanest tradesmen sip the dews of both hemispheres at a breakfast. The sweat of negroes and sailors [might I not say their *blood* and *lives* ?] are sometimes poured out like water, to secure the sweets of our favourite decoction. And yet it may be with a dish of tea in our hand, and a gold ring on our finger, we gravely complain that saving truth lies a great way off, and that God is unjust in placing it in obscure mines, which cannot be worked without some trouble and industry.

But (5) altho' no body can be established in the truth without LABOURING *for the meat, that endureth to everlasting life* ; yet God's terms of salvation are not so hard as some prejudiced people conceive. Nor do I scruple to assert, that if we could read the hearts of all men, we would see, that for a time unbelievers take as much pains to *exclude* the light of truth, as believers do to *welcome* it ; and that wicked men work as intensely [tho' not as intentionally] to make their reprobation and damnation certain, as good men do, to *make their calling and election sure* : For, *the wicked is snared in the WORK of HIS OWN hands—the reward of HIS HANDS shall be given him : — the wages of his sin is death*, and he frequently toils like a horse for his wages, *drawing iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin-*

ning as with a cart rope, to hale himself and others into the burning lake.

From the preceding answers I conclude, that God, who makes the golden light of the sun, and the silver light of the moon succeed each other, and who wisely tempers the blaze of a summer's day by the mildness of the starry night, with equal wisdom qualifies the blaze of the day of *truth* by the mild obscurity of a night of *probation*; not only that the *flaming* truth may be more delightful at its return, but also, that there may be room left for a *gentle trial* of our faith, and for the *reasonable rewardableness* of our works of faith.

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S E C T I O N IX.

I N F E R E N C E S.

(1) **I**F *faith* is so closely connected with **TRUTH**; *present salvation* with *faith*; and *eternal salvation* with the *works of faith*; how injudicious are those gentlemen, who assert, that *principles* are nothing; and that it little matters what doctrines we hold, provided our actions are good! Alas! if our leading principles are wrong, how can our actions be right? If we are men of *no* principles, or of *bad* principles, and do seemingly-good actions; do we not do them from *bad, pharisaical* motives? Even when such actions appear good to man, who judges according to appearance; are they not evil before the Searcher of hearts? Are they not detestable before the Examiner of principles? Undoubtedly; if they are *pharisaical*; *hypocrisy* being the most odious sort of iniquity, in the sight of him, who *requires truth in the inward parts*.

(2) If the effects of *Truth* are so wonderful; and if the pure *word* of God is essentially one with *Truth*; how fatal is the mistake of the laymen, who slight the gospel-word! who listen to a sermon with less attention than they do to a play! and who read the scrip-
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tures with less eagerness than they do the news-papers ! And how culpable are those clergymen, who preach the first sermon they set their hand upon ; without examining whether it contains truth, or error, or a mixture of both—at least, without considering whether it is adapted to the capacity, and circumstances of their hearers !

(3) Can we decry *prejudice* too much, if it unfits our souls for receiving the truth, as trash unfits our stomachs for receiving proper food ? Should not a narrow, bigoted spirit, that collects itself like an hedgehog in its own fancied orthodoxy, and bristles up assertions and invectives instead of arguments, be firmly opposed by every generous enquirer after Truth ? Can we deplore too much the case of those sanguine persons, who judge of the strength of their faith by the force of their prepossession ; and who fancy, that an hundred plain scriptures, and as many cogent arguments, have no weight, if they do not countenance their favourite sentiments, and misunderstood feelings ? And can we too warmly recommend a candid, sober, fearless turn of mind, which lays us open to information, and disposes us publicly to espouse the cause of Truth ; even when destruction threatens her, and her despised adherents ?

(4) *Charity rejoiceth in the TRUTH ; and tho' I speak with the tongues of angels, says St. Paul, if I have not charity, i. e. if I do not rejoice in the TRUTH, whether it makes for or against my prejudices, I am become as sounding brass.* Upon this footing, what can we say of those warm moralists, who, in their zeal for *works*, are ready to burn against the doctrine of faith ? What, of those rash solidifiers, who, in their zeal for *faith*, are ready to lay down their life against the doctrine of works ? Alas ! like St. Paul in the days of his ignorance, they court, and yet persecute the Truth ; they embrace, and yet stab the divine stranger. These false martyrs may give their body to be burnt for one truth against another ; but God will say to them, *Who required*

required this at your hands ? and they themselves will say, It profiteth us nothing.

(5) If there are various forms in the school of Truth, how unreasonable is it to say, that none have any acquaintance with her, but such as are in one of the highest forms ! And if the temple of Truth has various divisions to which we advance, as we go on *from faith to faith* ; how cruel is it to consign over to damnation the sincere souls, who have yet got no farther than the porch !

(6) If there are as many sorts of religious truths, as there are of nourishing food ; how irrational is it to despise those truths, which the apostle compares to *milk*, merely because they are not the truths, which he calls *strong meat* ! On the other hand, if we cannot yet receive those strong truths, how rash are we, if we represent them as chaff or poison ? And what mischief is done in the church of Christ, by those who deal in palpable absurdities, and in errors demonstrated to be of a stupifying or intoxicating nature ; especially if they retail such errors to an injudicious, credulous populace, under the name of *rich honey* and *gospel-murrow* !

(7) If divine Truth is one, thro' its various appearances ; and if *the light of the righteous*, who holds on his way, *shines more and more unto the perfect day* ; what shall we say of those prejudiced men, who oppose the Truth with all their might, merely because it does not come up to their false standard, or because it appears in a dress, to which they are not accustomed ? Did a Persian ever refuse to admire the *rising* sun, because it was not the *meridian* sun ; or laugh at it, as being an insignificant meteor, because it rose under a cloud ? If Christ is not ashamed to call himself *the Light* and *the Truth*, should we be ashamed to confess him in his lowest appearances ? Is there not some resemblance between Christ *natural*, and Christ *spiritual* ? If Christ exalted at the right hand of God, is one with Christ transfigured on the mount—bleeding on Calvary—lying in the manger—confined, an help-
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less embryo, in the virgin's womb; may not the triumphant Truth, that shines like the sun in the heart of a *father in Christ*, have some affinity with the spark, that glows in the heart of an infant in grace under the dispensation of Noah? Ought we to give up the greatest part of our neighbours, as men that "*time was had grace,*" when the scripture expressly declares, that *the saving grace of God has appeared unto all men*, and that *Christ spiritual is the light of the world, that enlightens every man*? Let mystical Herods seek the young child's life; but thou, man of God; leap for joy like the unborn Baptist, before the least and feeblest appearance of thy Lord. Instead of calling it "*time was had grace,*" that thou mayst cut it off the next moment as "*no grace,*" cherish it as *saving grace* in thy own breast, and in the heart of all that are around thee.

(8) If the most powerful displays of Truth improve its feeblest appearances, without ever *confounding* them; how mistaken are the men, who impose upon us the *immoral* doctrines of the *antinomians*; and the *unevangelical* doctrines of the *pharisees*. When we have once admitted, that "*There is a holy God, who makes a difference between the just and the unjust;*" can we, without renouncing that truth, turn antinomians, and think that a man, who actually defiles his neighbour's wife, can actually be a *man after God's own heart*?—And when we have been taught our second gracious lesson; namely, that "*We are miserable sinners;*" can we, without renouncing this principle, suppose that we can be saved any other way but by the covenant of grace and mercy? Away then, for ever away with *antinomian* and *pharisaic* delusions, which are built upon the ruins of these two capital truths; *God is holy, and Man is sinful!*

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S E C T I O N X.

An Address to Baptized Heathens.

HERE I would take leave of my readers ; but they have a *conscience*, as well as *reason* ; and therefore I beg leave to address the former of those powers, as bluntly as I have done the latter ; diversifying my expostulations, according to the different cases of the persons, into whose hands providence may direct these sheets.

1. If you do not make the bulk of my readers, I fear you make the bulk of the nation, O ye that regard pleasure, profit, and honour, more than justice, mercy, and the fear of God :—Ye, that far from embracing divine *Truth* at the hazard of your character, spread abroad scandalous *untruths*, to the ruin of other people's reputation :—Ye, who try to persuade yourselves, that religion is nothing but a monstrous compound of superstition, enthusiasm, and priestcraft :—Ye, who can violate the laws of temperance or honesty without one painful remorse ; breaking thro' promises, oaths, and matrimonial or sacramental engagements, as if there were no future state, no supreme Judge, no day of retribution, no divine law enacting, that *whoever loveth, or maketh a lie, shall be cast into the lake of fire* ; and that *the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God* :—YE are the persons, that I beg leave to call BAPTIZED HEATHENS. Baptismal water was applied to your body, as a figure of the grace which purifies believing souls. Ye received, and continue to bear a *christian* name, that binds upon you the strongest obligations you can possibly be under, to partake of *Christ's* holiness, and to lead a sober, *christian* life : But how opposite is your conduct to that of *Christ* ? Alas ! conscientious *heathens* would disown you ; and shall God own you ? Shall the searcher of hearts forgive your immorality,

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in consideration of your *hypocrisy* ? Will you live and die with such a *lie in your right hand*, and upon your forehead ? God forbid ! — If you have not sold yourselves to the father of deceits for ever ; pay yet some attention to *natural, moral, and evangelical* truths : they recommend themselves to your senses, your reason, and your conscience.

(1) Regard *natural* Truths. Earthly joys vanish like dreams. Life flies like an arrow. Your friends or neighbours are daily seized by sickness, and dragged into eternity. Death comes to terminate your delusions, and set his black seal upon your false lips, your wanton eyes, your rapacious hands, your luxurious palate, your sinful, treacherous breast. E'er long the king of terrors will screw you down in his hard couch, a *coffin* : he will convey you away in his black carriage, a *hearse* : he will confine you to his loathsome dungeon, a *grave* ; and there he will keep you in chains of darkness and corruption, till the trump of God summon you to *judgment*.

(2) And say not that the doctrine of a day of *judgment* is a fable. If you do, I appeal to *moral* Truths. Is there not an essential difference between truth and falsehood, between mercy and cruelty, between honesty and villany ? Have you, with all the pains you have taken about it, been able to erase from your breast the law of truth and mercy, which the righteous God has deeply engraven there ? Is there not something within you, that, bad as you are, forbids you to wish you father dead, that you may have his estate ; and your wife poisoned, that you may marry the woman you love ? If you say, that these are only prejudices of education ; I ask, How come these prejudices to be universal ? Why are they *the same*, even where the methods of education are most *contrary* ? Why do they reign in the very countries, where there are neither *magistrates* nor *priests* ; and where of course *politicks* and *priestcraft* never bore the sway ? If your conscience would condemn you for the above-mentioned crimes ; how much more will God do it, who is
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the Author and Judge of your conscience? Does not your good sense tell you, that, so sure as the wonderful machine of this world did not make, and does not preserve itself, there is a God, who made and preserves it? and that this God is possessed of ten thousand times more truth, equity, impartiality, justice, and power, than all the *righteous* rulers in the world were ever endued with? And, to say nothing of the gracious cheeks, and sad forebodings of your guilty conscience; does not your *reason* discover, that as certain as this great God is possessed of infinite wisdom, power, and justice; and has given us a moral law, he will call us to an account for our breaches of it; and that, as he does not in general do it in this world, he will infallibly do it in a future state?

(3) If reason and conscience thus lead you to religion; regard *religious* truths: They are supported by so great a variety of well-attested facts, by such clouds of righteous witnesses, by so many astonishing miracles, and accomplished prophecies—they so perfectly agree with the glory of our Creator, the interests of mankind, the laws of our nature, and the native desire we have for immortality—they so exactly coincide with our present, as well as future happiness; that you cannot expose your unreasonableness more, and do yourselves a greater injury, than by rejecting them.

What *reasonable* objection can ye make to these scriptural directions? *Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Speak the TRUTH in LOVE. Return to the Lord. Call upon his name.* Say, “Grant to us in this world the knowledge of thy TRUTH, and in the world to come life everlasting.” Confess yourselves sinners, great sinners: Spread this melancholy truth before the throne of divine mercy, — spread it with tears of undissembled repentance. *Except you repent, you shall all perish:* but, if you *sow in tears, you shall reap in joy.*

And suppose not, that I want to drive you to despair. On the contrary, I declare, that dangerous as your case is, it is not absolutely desperate. The gospel offers you a remedy. You have dealt with lying shadows,

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dows, but you may yet embrace the eternal substance. You have wounded the Truth; but Christ, from whom you have the name of *christian* — Christ, who says, *I am the Truth*, has been wounded for you. You have crucified revealed Truth, and the Prince of life has been crucified in your place. I point you to his cross, and declare in the name of unprejudiced reason, that few histories are supported by such a variety of indisputable evidences, as the wonders that redeeming love wrought on Calvary for you.

Let not the scandalous falls of apostates, and the bad lives of hypocritical christians, frighten you from the gospel. Immoral and unloving men, high as their pretensions to faith may be, are no more christians than you. Suffer not the disputes of professors to keep you in infidelity; for they prove the truth, and not the falsehood of christianity; being expressly foretold Acts xx. 30. 1 Cor. xi. 19. Jude iv. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Nor stupidly wonder that the Serpent should most spitefully bruise the heel of the Truth that most powerfully bruises his head. Above all be candid; be inquisitive; apply to the *Father of lights* for direction; and his invisible hand will conduct you over every rock of offence, and lead you to the sure foundation, *the rock of ages, the TRUTH as it is in Jesus*.

How near is that *Truth* to you! It always *embraces* Mercy, and Mercy now embraces you. Oh! the length and breadth, the depth and height of redeeming mercy! It spares you to believe—to repent—to live. The arms of divine patience still encircle your guilty soul, and bear up your mortal body above the terrors of the grave. Crying as your sins are, the cries of your Saviour's blood are yet heard above them. Provoking as your unbelief is, it has not yet provoked God to set upon you the seal of absolute reprobation. Unspotted Holiness, glorious Majesty, flaming Power, thundering Justice, weeping Mercy, bleeding Love—all the divine attributes join yet in a concert of grace and truth. You are the object of it; and the burden
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of their terrifying, melting accents is, *Turn ye, turn ye : Why will ye die, O house of Israel ? Why should iniquity be your ruin ? Turn ! for I have redeemed you. Turn ! and the second death shall have no power over you. Turn ! and you shall have a crown of life.*

Thus, my dear fellow-sinners, and far more earnestly than I can describe, Mercy and Truth exert themselves in your behalf ; waiting only for your consent, to diffuse their divine perfumes thro' your converted souls. This is *the day of God's power* — Your gospel-day — This is *a day of salvation*, a day of the spiritual jubilee, a day of *the year of release* : Know it : improve it. Break your bonds : claim your liberty : change your service : scorn to be the devil's drudges : become the servants of the most High. Regard neither the husks, nor the grunts of the swine : the heavenly feast is before you. The Father of the prodigal son runs to meet, to forgive, to welcome, to embrace you ; and to raise your doubting hearts, he bids me impress these gracious promises upon your yielding breasts. *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and does that which is lawful and right (and what is more lawful and right for sinners, than to repent, believe, and obey the gospel) he shall save his soul alive.—Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, for he is merciful ; and to our God, for he will* ABUNDANTLY pardon.

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S E C T I O N XI.

An Address to Christianized Jews.

AND Ye, christianized Jews, will ye still be offended at our *sincerely* preaching *free* grace to all our fellow-gentiles ? Will ye still stop your ears and cry out, *The children of Abraham, the temple of the Lord are*

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we? Or, in other terms, We are the little flock necessarily contradistinguished from the immense herd of absolute reprobates? Will ye still assert † “*Reprobos ideo in hanc pravitatem addictos, quia iusto et in- scrutabili Dei iudicio suscitati sunt at gloriam ejus sua damnatione illustrandam :*” “*That the repro- bates are devoted to wickedness, because thro’ the just and unsearchable judgment of God, they were raised up to illustrate his glory by their damnation?*” — Will ye still add? † “*Quos vero damnationi addicit, his iusto quidem et irreprehensibili, sed incomprehensibili ejus iudicio, vitæ aditum præcludi :*” “*That by God’s just and irreprehensible, tho’ incomprehensible judgment, the way to life is blocked up for those, whom he has devoted to damnation?*” — Will ye never blush to intimate? † “*Quos ergo Deus præterit, re- probat : neque aliâ causâ, nisi quod ab hæreditate, quam filiis suis prædestinat, illos vult excludere.*” “*Therefore those whom God passes by, he re- probates ; for NO other reason but this : He WILL ex- clude them from the inherisance, which he predestinates for his sons?*” — Will ye still call “blind,” all who think, that God is sincerely loving to every man, without any exception in the day of salvation? Will ye still monopolize the light that enlightens every man, who comes into the world? Will ye still sound the bottomless abyss of divine mercy with your short line, and judge of the Almighty’s enlarged heart by the narrowness of your own? O learn to know the God of Love, the God of Truth, better. *He is not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance.—He commands ALL men every where to repent :* And he bids us *account his long-suffering, salvation ; assuring us, that the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering leadeth to repentance even those wretches, who, after their hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of his righteous judgment.*

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† These three quotations are taken from *Calvin’s institutes. Third Book. Chap. 24. Sec. 14.—Chap. 21. Sec. 7.—Chap. 23. Sec. 1.*

If you will not credit God's *word*, pay at least some regard to his OATH. As I LIVE says he, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live.* — Just as if he said: ‘ By myself I swear, that I have absolutely reprobated no man. If any perish, their destruction is of themselves, and not of merciless decrees rashly imputed to my sovereignty. Free-agency in man, and not free-wrath in me, sinks those, who make their conditional rejection and reprobation sure by their *unnecessary* unbelief, and *avoidable* impenitency. Far from delighting *absolutely* in the reprobation of any one sinner, I solemnly protest, that I would *offer violence* to the *liberty* of the most obstinate, and *force* them all into heaven by the exertion of my omnipotence; if my Truth as a Lawgiver, my Justice as a Judge, my Veracity as the inspirer of my prophets, my Wisdom as a Rewarder, and my Equity as a Punisher, did not absolutely forbid it.’

Come then, my prepossessed brethren, show yourselves *the children of Abraham*: return to the God of your Father — the God by whom *ALL the families of the earth are BLESSED in the seed of Abraham*. Think not that the Lord is only jealous of his supreme dominion; nor make him *graceless* and *merciless* towards countless myriads of reprobated infants to extol the *grim sovereignty*, which your imagination has set up.

“ Set not at odds heav’n’s jarring attributes;

“ Nor, with one excellence, another wound.”

Allow God to be “ all o’er, consummate, absolute,

“ Full-orb’d, in his whole round of rays complete,”

merciful in the day of salvation, and *just* in the day of judgment, to *every* individual of the human race. What can you possibly object to a doctrine so rational, so scriptural, so worthy of God ?

If you complain that we make the way to heaven too broad, I ask, Ought we not to represent it as broad

as the scriptures make it? Do we make it **WIDER** than St. Peter did, when truth and love made him divest himself of his jewish prejudices, and cry out with pleasing amaze : *Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him?* Or, do we make it **NARROWER** than St. Paul, when he wrote, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : no adulterer, &c. hath ANY inheritance in the kingdom of God?*

For your own credit do not ask : “ If all men may
 “ be saved thro’ Christ, by following the light of the
 “ gospel-dispensation, which they are under, what
 “ advantage hath the christian? and what profit is
 “ there of baptism and christianity?” If you make
 such an objection, you show yourselves to be “ **CHRIS-
 TIANIZED JEWS**” indeed. The apostle has just said,
If the uncircumcision i. e. if uncircumcised heathens
 [like Melchisedec or Job, Cornelius or the Canaanish
 woman] *keep the righteousness of the law* according
 to their light, *shall not their uncircumcision be counted
 for circumcision?* that is, shall they not be saved, as
 well as if they were circumcised jews? St. Paul saw,
 that the partial heart of the jews would take fright at
 his doctrine; and would start an objection, capable of
 demolishing, if possible, the impartiality of God, and
 the freeness of the everlasting gospel. He therefore
 produces this formidable objection thus : If the Gen-
 tiles may be saved by following their light, *what ad-
 vantage hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circum-
 cision?* Rom. iii 1. The answer which he gives, stops
 the mouth of all jews, whether they live in London,
 Rome, or Jerusalem : *The Jews*, says he, [and much
 more the Christians] *have much advantage every way,
 chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles
 of God.* The Heathens have only the light of God’s
 works, the light of God’s providence, the light of rea-
 son, the light of conscience, and the light of that *sal-
 ving* grace, which has appeared to all men, teaching them

to live soberly, &c. and reproving them when they do not. But the Jews, [to say nothing of the light of *tradition*, which is far brighter among them, than among the Heathens] over and above this *five-fold* light, have the light of the *old* testament; and Christians, the light of the *new*.

Come then, my prejudiced brethren, let St. Paul's answer satisfy you. Get from under your parched gourd of reprobation: *Let not your eye be evil, because God is good*; nor fret, like Jonah, because the Father of mercies extends his compassion, even to all the humbled Heathens in the great city of Niniveh. *As the elect of God, put on bowels of mercy*, and show yourselves the genuine children of him, who is *loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all his works*: So shall your mistakes no longer straiten your minds, sour your tempers, and shut your hearts against your "*non-elected*" neighbours.

And supposing you are of the happy few, in whose souls the impartial grace of God over-rules the ordinary consequences of your partial doctrines: — Supposing you are *LOVING to every man*, and have more bowels of mercy than the God whom you extol: — Supposing you are *TRUE* to all men, and surpass in *sincerity* the God whom you recommend, who calls *all men every where to repent*, and all the day long stretches out his hands in token of his compassionate love to people, on whom he absolutely fixed his immortal hatred before the foundation of the world: — Supposing, I say, you have the happiness of being so much better than your principles, so much holier than the God of your *OPINIONS*. [Note: I say not *the God of your SALVATION*] — Yet, by renouncing those *opinions*, you will no longer countenance antinomianism, deceive the simple, contradict yourselves, shock moralists, and render christianity contemptible in the eyes of all, that confound it with your doctrines of *forcible* grace to hundreds, and of *forcible* wrath to thousands.

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† Should you countenance your *jewish* notions by saying, “ We are *Christians* : we have nothing to do with the heathens ; ” I answer : (1) You have far too much to do with them, when, by the “ doctrine of grace,” which you so zealously inculcate, you *indirectly* send them, one and all, to the pit ; unless they are brought under the *christian* dispensation. (2) You renounce the Church of England, if you disregard them : for on good-friday [the day on which Christ *tasted death for every man*] she enjoins us to pray thus for them : “ O merciful God, who hatest *nothing* that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a *funer*, “ but RATHER that he should be converted and live, “ have mercy upon ALL Jews, Turks, Infidels, and “ Hereticks.” (3) You indirectly sacrifice the feelings of humanity, and the honour of God’s persecutions to your unscriptural doctrine of grace, when you embrace the horrid idea of the ensured damnation of the Heathens, for the injudicious pleasure of saying, “ Why me ! Why me ! ” and of teaching the “ poor [reprobated] creatures,” while they sink into the bottomless pit, to say, “ Why me ! Why me ! ” —A dreadful *Why me* this, which is not less offensive to God’s justice, impartiality, goodness, and truth ; than YOUR *Why me* is odious to his wisdom, equity, veracity, and holiness. (4) If Cain was culpable for intimating, that he had nothing to do with his brother, when he had just knocked him on the head ; are they praise-worthy, who enjoy with peculiar delight, and recommend with uncommon glee, “ doctrines of grace ” [so called] which absolutely fix the *unavoidable* damnation of perhaps as many millions of their unborn fellow-creatures, as Abel had hairs upon

† Should the persons, whom I now address, say, that I falsify my subscriptions to the 18th article of our church, by asserting that even the heathens, who fear God and work righteousness by the general light of Christ’s grace, are accepted thro’ Christ’s *unknown* merits ; I refer them to the 57th and 58th pages of the *Vindication of Mr. Wesley’s Minutes*, where that objection is answered.

upon his head ? And do they mend the matter, when, to vindicate their severe opinions, they calmly wipe their mouth, and say, " We have nothing to do with the Heathens : " That is, in plain English, " Our orthodoxy demands, that they should inevitably perish, if they do not explicitly believe in Christ crucified of whom they never heard : nor do we care what becomes of them. Let them sink, provided *our* doctrines of grace stand."

O my dear brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you, tho' your's is straitened towards the Heathens, and those, who do not engross the light of *the sun of righteousness*. Suffer the word of expostulation one moment more. Do not you detest the character of a stiff pharisee ? I know you do, in the circumcised progeny : And why should you admire it in the baptized race ? I am persuaded, that you abhor the damnable bull of those self-elected men of old, who, from the height of their conceited orthodoxy, looked down upon their neighbours, and said, "*This people who knoweth not*" [what we call] "*the law, are cursed.*" And will you exemplify their uncharitable positiveness by indirectly saying, *This people*, these myriads of men, *who know not* [what we call] THE GOSPEL, *are cursed* ? Will ye turn christianized pharisees, to countenance abandoned antinomians ? — No : the spark of candor in your breast is stirred, and almost sets fire to your prejudices. You are staggered, you are ready to yield to the force of Truth ; some of you would do it even now, if you were not afraid, that our doctrine of *free grace* obscures the *christian* dispensation, and encourages the pernicious delusion of ANTICHRISTIAN MORALISTS. To convince you, that your fear is groundless, permit me to expostulate with them before you.

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S E C T I O N XII.

An Address to antichristian Moralists.

MORAL MEN, who ridicule the *christian* faith ; you suppose, that your honesty counterbalances your sins, which, by a soft name, you call *foibles* ; and for which you hope, that God will never punish you with hell-torments. I do not desire to make the worst of things. I wish, you were as good as you fancy yourselves to be. I wish, you may have been as exact in *all* the branches of your duty as you pretend. I would rejoice, if the law of respectful obedience to your superiors, of courteous love to your equals, and of brotherly-kindness to your inferiors had always been fulfilled in your words and actions, in your looks and tempers. I am ready to congratulate you, if in all cases ye have done to your *fellow-creatures*, exactly as ye would be done by ; and never plunged once into the gulph of intemperance : But permit me to ask ; If you have *fellow-creatures*, have you not a *Creator* ? And if you have a Creator, do not reason, and conscience, command you to render to him warm gratitude, chearful praise, humble adoration, and constant obedience. But have ye done this one year, one month, one day, *ONE hour* in *ALL* your life ?

Altho' ye are so ready to make us understand, that ye are not as other men, adulterers, unjust, uncharitable, hypocrites, &c. are ye entirely satisfied with your own goodness ? Nay, if ever you *looked into the perfect law of liberty*, and searched your breasts with *the candle of the Lord*, can you say, before the omniscient Searcher of hearts and spirits, that there is one of the commandments which you never broke in its spiritual meaning ?

If upon second thoughts ye cannot acquit yourselves : and if God's dignity as a Creator, his veracity as a Lawgiver, his wisdom as a Governor, his justice

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as a Judge, his holiness as a God, forbid him to hold the guilty guiltless; or to forgive them in a manner inconsistent with any one of his infinite perfections; are ye wise to despise an Advocate with Him — a divine Prophet—an atoning Mediator? Is it prudent in you to run *from* the city of refuge, to which you should fly with unabated swiftness? Do ye act a reasonable part when ye shelter under the dispensation of the Heathens, from the blessings that pursue, and from the light that surrounds you, in this christian land? If I may allude to the mysterious divisions of Solomon's temple; will ye obstinately remain in *the court of the Gentiles*, when you are graciously invited to enter into *the holy place*, with sincere Jews; yea, into *the holy of holies*, with true Christians? Think ye, that, because righteous Heathens are saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, ye may be saved upon *their* plan? If ye do, may the following remarks help you to see the unreasonableness of this conclusion!

(1) Not to repeat the hints already given to *baptized Heathens*; I ask: Is not a grain of *sincere* love to truth, the very beginning of a true conversion? Is that man a *sincere* lover of light, who runs away from the light of the sun and moon, under pretence that he has the light of a star? Do those people *sincerely* love money, who, when they are presented with *gold* and *silver*, throw it back to the face of their benefactor, because they have some *brass*? And is that moralist a *sincere* lover of truth, who contemptuously rejects the *silver* truths of the jewish dispensation, and the *golden* truths of the christian gospel, under pretence that he is an adept in "the religion of nature," and has, what I beg leave to call, the *brass* of heathenism?

(2) Ye talk much of the *religion of nature*: But, should ye not distinguish between the religion *natural* to man in his *unfallen* state, and that which is *natural* to him in his *fallen* condition? Is not the regimen, which is *natural* to the healthy, *unnatural* and frequently destructive to the sick? If upright, innocent man needed not a spiritual physician, does it follow that

that depraved, guilty man can do without one ? Does not heathenism allow the fall and degeneracy of man ? Have not some of the wisest pagans seen, tho' darkly, the need both of a mediator, and of a propitiatory sacrifice ? Do ye think it prudent, so to depend upon your *self-righteousness*, as to trample under foot the jewish and christian revelation, together with the discoveries of considerate Heathens ? Does your *wisdom* show itself to advantage, when it thus makes you sink below heathenism itself ?

(3) No adult Heathen was ever saved without the repentance of the contrite publican. " I am a guilty, helpless sinner, totally undone, if the mercy of him that made me, does not extend itself to me : Great Author of my existence, pity, pardon, and save me for thy mercy's sake." Now, if ye were brought to this genuine repentance, would ye despise the light of revelation, that recommends it, and leads on to farther attainments ? Think ye, that those, who *sincerely* rejoice in the dawn of day, will readily decry morning light ? Is it not therefore much to be feared, that pharisaism and impenitency, stand in your way to christianity, more than a mistaken respect for reason and truth ? Nay, does not *reason* bid you assent to well-attested matter of fact ? And are not the jewish and christian revelations so inseparably connected with notorious events, that it is less absurd to doubt the exploits of Alexander and Cæsar, than to disbelieve the miracles of Moses and Jesus Christ ?

(4) The Heathens, who were saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, far from *despising* it as you do, *implicitly* desired it ; and those, that were blessed with a ray of it, rejoiced in it like Abraham. That precious knowledge is offered to you ; and, flocking to say ! you reject it ! you make sport with it ! you pass jests upon it ! you call it imposture ! enthusiasm ! — Oh ! how much *more tolerable* will it be for pharisaic Heathens ; yea, for Chorazin and Bethsaida in the day of judgment, than for you, if you die under *so fatal an error* ! And how can ye flatter yourselves,
that

that because righteous Heathens, who have but *one* talent, shall be saved in the *faithful* improvement of it; you, who have *five*, shall be saved, tho' you bury *four* of them?

“ Oh ! but I, for one, improve the *fifth* : I am *moral*.”—God forbid, I should discountenance *morality* ! I value it next to piety : nay, *true* morality is the second branch of true piety. Nevertheless, this you must permit me to say : Your morality hath either pride, impenitency, and hypocrisy at the bottom ; or humility, sincerity, and truth. If it is the former ; your morality, like Jonah's gourd has a worm at its root. When the sun of temptation shall shine warmly upon you, or when death shall lay his cold hand upon you, your morality will wither, and afford you neither safety, nor comfort : But, if it has sincerity, and truth at the bottom ; and if you are faithful ; your little light will increase, the clouds raised by your prejudices will break, and you shall *see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ*, because, like Saul of Tarsus, you do not oppose the truth maliciously, but *ignorantly in unbelief*. And Oh ! may these pages convey to you the accents of that *Truth*, which *shall make you free* ! and may the gracious voice, which formerly thundered in the ears of the great Jewish moralist, the fierce opposer of the Christian gospel, *Saul ! Saul ! why persecutest thou me ?*—May that voice, I say, whisper to each of you, “ *Honeste ! Honestus ! why neglectest thou me ? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest* — Jesus, who yet act a mediator's part between my righteous Father and thy self-righteous soul. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks* of my truth, and the stings of thy conscience.—I am a sun of righteousness and truth : Wrap thyself in unbelief no more : let the beams of my grace penetrate thy prejudiced soul, and kindle redeeming love in thy frozen breast. Nor force me by an *obstinate* and *final* denial of me before men, to fulfil upon thee the most terrible of all my threatnings by *denying thee also before my Father and his angels* ; for, if YE, to whom my gospel is FULLY preached, *believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*”

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SEC.

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S E C T I O N XIII.

An Address to a Penitent Mourner.

THOU deniest that loving Redeemer no longer,
 O thou poor, MOURNING PENITENT, who art
 ready to sink under the burden of thy sins, and longest
 to find rest for thy dying soul. The Lord, who pro-
 nounces thee *blest*, says, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my*
mourning people. — *By whom shall I comfort thee?* —
 Oh! that it were by me! Oh! that I were so happy
 as to administer one drop of gospel-cordial to thy
 fainting spirit! Tho' I am less than the least of my
 Lord's servants, he sends thee by me a Benjamin's
 portion: Be not above accepting it. Thou hast hum-
 bly received the *wounding truths* of the gospel; why
 shouldest thou obstinately reject the *healing ones*?
 Thou hast eaten the bitter herbs of repentance: yea,
 thou feedest upon them daily, and preferrest them to
 all the sweets of sin: Why then, Oh! why should thy
 heart rise against the flesh and blood of the true pas-
 chal Lamb? Why shouldest thou starve, when *all*
things are now ready? Why shouldest thou not believe
 the *whole truth*, as well as *one part* of it? Will the
word of God's grace be more true ten years hence,
 than it is now? Is not *Christ the same yesterday, to day,*
and for ever? If thy dull *believing in God* has already
 saved thee from thy vain conversation, and thy out-
 ward sins; how much more will a chearful *believing*
in the Lord Jesus, save thee into christian righteou-
 ness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!

Do not *begin to make excuse* and say, "I must not
 believe the joyous truths of the gospel, till they are
first powerfully applied to my soul." It is right, very
 right for thee, for all, never to rest short of such an
 application. But how art thou to wait for it? In the
 way of duty? or out of it? Surely in the way of duty.
 And is it not thy duty, no longer to *make God a liar*?

Is

Is it not thy bounden duty, as it is thy glorious privilege, to *set thy seal*, as thou canst, to the word of God's grace; as well as to the declaration of his justice? Does he not charge thee to *believe* [tho' it should be *in hope against hope*] the reviving record, which he has given of his Son? Is not this the record: That God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son?—That to as many as receive him—that is, to as many as believe on his name, he gives power to become the sons of God?—That God commendeth his love towards us, in that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us “men, and for our salvation”?—That his blood, thro' faith on our part, cleanseth from all sin?—That he was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification?—And that he even now maketh intercession for us; bearing us out of hell in the arms of his mercy; and drawing all men to him, who justifieth the ungodly, that renounce their ungodliness as thou hast done, and believe in Jesus as I want thee to do?

If it is a saying worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the chief of sinners, upon gospel terms; he undoubtedly came to save me and thee. Do not thou then foolishly excommunicate thyself from redeeming love. Away with thy unchristian, discouraging notions about absolute reprobation, præterition, non-election, &c. &c. Doubt not but thou art **CONDITIONALLY** elected, that is, *chosen IN CHRIST* to eternal salvation; yea peculiarly chosen of God **EXPLICITLY** to believe in that *Just one*, who gave himself a ransom for all; and by his one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the **WHOLE WORLD**.—Believe then thy election, and that of God.—As certain as Christ hung upon the cross, flesh of thy flesh and bone of thy bone, thou art chosen to eternal salvation **THRO' sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth**. Wilt thou then be powerfully saved here, and eternally saved hereafter? Only make thy calling and election sure, **THRO' SANC-**

TIFICATION.

TIFICATION of the spirit ; and make sanctification of the spirit sure, THRO' BELIEF of the TRUTH.

Believe, as well as thou canst, this comfortable, this sanctifying truth, *God so loved THE WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Be not afraid to conclude, upon the divine record, that God loves thee, that *Christ gave himself for THEE*, and that the Holy Ghost will gloriously witness the Saviour's love to thy soul. And calmly, yet earnestly wait for a divine token, and an abiding sense of this love upon thy heart.

But, I repeat it, wait in faith : — wait, believing the truth : — wait, doing *thy* work ; and Christ will surely finish *his own* : He will *save thee to the uttermost*, from sin and hell, into holiness and heaven. Remember, that as he once bled for thee, so he now *worketh in thee both to will and to do.* — Up then, and be doing. *WORK OUT thy own salvation with fear and trembling.* Thou canst never do God's part, and he *will* never do *thine* : Do not expect it ; nor let the song of “ finished salvation ” make thee conclude, that thou hast nothing to do. Even J. Bunyan, in his “ *Heavenly footman*,” cries out to the slothful, “ *If thou wilt have heaven, thou must run for it.*” And if thou dost not believe him, believe the christians of the Lock-chapel, and of the Tabernacle, who, when they do justice to the second gospel-axiom, agree to “ *complain of spiritual sloth*,” in the following hymn :

“ Our drowsy pow'rs, why sleep ye so ?
Awake, each *suggish* soul.
Nothing has half thy *work to do*,
Yet nothing 's half so dull.

The little ants, for one poor grain,
Labour, and tug, and strive ;
Yet we, who have a *heaven to obtain*,
How *negligent* we live !

We, for whom God the Son came down,
And labour'd for our good ; How

How careless to SECURE that crown,
 He purchas'd with his blood !
 Lord, shall we lie so sluggish still,
 And never *act our Parts* !
 Come, holy Dove, from th' heav'nly hill,
 And sit, and warm our hearts."

The *God of truth* will warm thy heart in a rational manner, by the *truth*, which is the divine cordial generally used by the Comforter for that purpose. Thou must therefore take that cordial first. If thou art of *little faith*, there is no need that thou shouldst be of *little sense* also. Some *absurdly* refuse to believe the gospel till they can feel it, if I may so speak, with their finger and thumb : so gross, so carnal are their ideas of truth ! And others think it their duty just to look at, or hear about the gospel feast ; supinely waiting till all its rich blessings are forcibly thrust into their hearts, or at least conveyed there, without any endeavour of their own. " When the truth shall be powerfully applied to my soul, says a modern Thomas, I will believe, and not before : " Avoid this common mistake. If thou wert invited to a feast, and one said, You must not eat this rich food, unless it is *first* powerfully applied to your stomach ; " wouldst thou not reply, that thou must *first* eat it, in order to such an application ? Be as wise in spirituals ; and remember that the way of relishing the *gospel*, and FEELING it to be *the power of God unto salvation*, is actually to believe it as we can, till *the spirit of truth* makes us feel its full efficacy.

To *eat* or *drink* spiritually, and to *believe* or *receive* the truth, are gospel-terms of the same import. Come then, leave all thy excuses to those, who have learned the lessons of *voluntary*, tiresome *humility*. If the king offered thee a present, would it not be impertinent to make him stretch out his hand for one hour, under pretence that thou art not yet worthy of his bounty ? And thinkest thou, that a similar conduct is not highly provoking to the King of kings ? Does he not com-plain.

plain, *I called and ye refused:—I stand at the door and knock:—I am wet with the dew of the night:—All the day long have I stretched my hands to idle and sturdy beggars—yea, to a gainsaying and disobedient people?* Come then, know thy distance: know thy place: know thy God: send thy absurd ceremoniousness back to Geneva: crucify thy guilty fears on Calvary; and make the best of thy way to Sion, *the mountain where God has made unto ALL people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines, of fat things full of marrow, of wines well refined.*

There is room, says the Lord: beat down their unbelief with the *new thrashing instrument that hath teeth*; bind their souls with all the cords of divine and brotherly love; draw them with the bands of a man, with arguments, threatnings, promises, expostulations, &c. *compel them to come in.* There is balm enough in Gilead, bread enough in my house, love enough in my heart, blood enough in the fountain that my Son has opened for sin, grace enough in the river that flows from my throne, truth enough in the gospel of my grace, to heal, nourish, delight, transport a world of prodigal sons and daughters. And is there not enough for thee, who *fearst God?* for thee, to whom *the word of this christian, this great salvation is sent?* Did not Christ himself break the bread of consolation for thee, when he said, *Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you?* Did he not offer thee the cup of salvation, when he added, *This is the cup of the new testament in my blood shed for the remission of sins; drink*

ALL of it, and carry it into all nations—preach it, offer it, to every creature. I bring thee this bread; it came down from heaven to give life to the world: it was surely consecrated in Gethsemane, and broken on Calvary for THEE, man, for THEE, woman, and for THY salvation. Oh! if the fragments of perishing, barley-bread were so to be gathered, that none of them might be lost; with what thankfulness shouldst thou receive the morsel, which I set before thee! With what hunger after righteousness shouldst thou feast upon it!

it ! How shouldst thou try to relish every crumb, every particle of gospel-truth — of *the meat that endureth to everlasting life* — of *the word of the Lord, that abideth for ever*.

Wonder at our Lord's condescension. Lest thou shouldst think, that the word of his servants is insignificant, when it is the word of truth ; he *prays particularly for them, that shall believe on him thro' their word* ; and he asks, *How is it that ye do not discern this time of love ? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right, and make for your peace ? — O Ye, that have no money, come, buy and eat wine and milk ; yea eat and drink abundantly, O beloved, without money and without price. HEARKEN diligently unto me : BUT ye that which is good : Let your soul delight itself in fatness, in the richest gospel-truths. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the bread and water of life freely. Thus the Water and the Blood, the Spirit and the Word sweetly agree to invite thee, to chide thy delays, to bid thee come and welcome to Christ, and to all the unspeakable riches of his grace.*

If thou refusest this drop of gospel-cordial, this crumb of the bread of life ; or if, after a faint attempt to take it, thou sinkest back into thy stupid unbelief, I beg leave to enquire into the reason. (1) *Is it the hour and the power of darkness ? Is thy mind so confused, and thy heart so distracted, that in this moment thou canst neither consider, nor welcome the truth ? In this case, wait groaning : If thou canst not wait in hope believing against hope, endeavour at least not to yield to despair. This storm will soon blow over ; the time of refreshing will come ; and the Lord, who permits thee to have fellowship with him in Gethsemane, will soon enable thee to triumph with him upon the mount.*

(2) Hast thou little or no appetite for the truth ? In this case I fear, thou still feedest upon husks and ashes, which spoil thy spiritual digestion ; and I advise thee to exercise repentance ; remembering that *to be carnally minded is death*, and that the promise is not made to the slothful ; but to them, who *thro' faith,*
and

and patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory — to them who, in taking up their cross, and denying themselves, inherit the gospel-promises.

(3) Hast thou made an absurd covenant with unbelief, as Thomas? Art thou determined not to credit God's record, unless he comes down to thy terms? Dost thou still confound faith with its fruits, and God's work with thine own? — If this is thy case, how justly may the Lord suffer thee to go on moping, not only for a week, as the obstinate apostle did; but for years! And after all, when thou hast long dishonoured God, and tormented thyself by thy wilful unbelief; thou wilt be glad to do upon a death-bed, what I want thee to do now. Being then surrounded by threatening billows, driven from thy carnal moorings, and tossed into true wisdom, thou wilt without ceremony venture upon the merits and blood of thy Saviour, and strive to enter by wrestling faith, and agonizing prayer, into *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Happy would it be for thee in the mean time, if thou wert not wiser in thy own conceit than seven men that can render a reason; if thou wert not obstinately bent upon nursing thy curse; if thou didst confer with flesh and blood no more; and if, regarding the gospel-passport more than solidian embargoes, and the word of God more than the dispiriting speeches of faint-hearted spies, thou becamest one of the *BABES, to whom it is our heavenly Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom*; one of the *VIOLENT who take it by force*. Thou wouldst soon find, that these two dispositions are as compatible as the two gospel-axioms; and, *receiving the end of thy faith*, thou wouldst soon, perhaps to-day, experience the astonishing force of Truth, and taste the ravishing powers of the world to come.

S E C.



S E C T I O N XIV.

An Address to Christian Believers.

YE taste those powers, happy believers, who see that God is love — boundless, free, redeeming, pardoning, comforting, sanctifying love in Jesus Christ. The more you believe it, and the more you feel it. Do then always *the work of faith*, and you shall always *abound in the patience of hope, and in the labour of love*. You have believed the Truth, and it has made you free : *Rejoice then in the Truth : Worship the God of Truth : Triumph in Christ, the living Truth : And be daily baptized with the Spirit of Truth : Beware of enthusiasm ; speak the words of soberness and Truth : God is not the author of non-sense.*

Sail with all possible care thro' the straits of pharisaism and antinomianism. Many, by deviating from the word, have almost *made shipwreck of the faith*. While some rest in high, pharisaic forms; others catch at empty solidian shadows; or slide into the peculiarities of a censorious mysticism, harden themselves against *the gentleness of Christ*, and oppose a *part* of the truth as it is in Jesus : Embrace ye the *whole* : Be valiant for the *whole* : Recommend the *whole* : But, above all, bring forth the fruits of the *whole*.

Be steady : Many who believed once as firmly as ye do, that Christ was a sacrifice for sin, consider him now only as a martyr for the truth. And some, who were fully persuaded, that God is *loving to every man* while the day of salvation lasts, now can *bear*, yea perhaps *delight* to hear it insinuated, that he is graceless and merciless to myriads of his unborn creatures. Be not thus carried about by a blast of vain doctrine, in opposition to the full tide of scripture and reason. Honour all men, and give double honour to those to whom

whom it is due ; but be not moved from your steadfastness either by names, or numbers. To judge of truth by popularity, is absurd. Warm, zealous men, who can draw the attention, and work upon the passions of the populace, will always be popular ; Mr. W—s not excepted : but his popularity, you know, is no proof that his principles are unexceptionable. Go not then by that deceitful rule. When Truth is at stake, mind popular applause as little as a Syrian's song ; and regard a Bonner's rack as little as a Nebuchadnezzar's dulcimer. Be cast into the furnace of persecution with *two* companions, rather than to bow with *thousands* to the most shining, the most celebrated, and the richest image of error. If your two companions forsake you, Oh ! do not forsake the Truth. Turn not your back upon her, when she wants you most. Run not away from her colours, when the enemy pours in like a flood. If she is driven out of the professing church, follow her to the wilderness — and if need be, to the den of lions. There the God of Daniel will be with you : And from thence he will bring you out : for God will stand by the Truth, and she will prevail at last. *Buy her* therefore at any rate ; *buy her*, tho' you should give your last mite of wealth, and your last scrap of reputation for her : *and sell her not*, tho' you should gain the whole world by the unhappy bargain.

These things, O men of God, have I written unto you concerning them that, by fair shows of spirituality and voluntary humility, seduce you into pharisaism or antinomianism : But the anointing, which you have received of God, abideth in you, (since ye have not been seduced) it is truth, and is no lie, abide in it therefore : Err not from the Truth. Walk in the Truth : Do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth : And, as you have purified your souls by obeying the Truth, thro' the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that this love extend itself particularly to your mistaken opponents : Love them, love one another with a pure heart fervently. You will often be obliged to part with peace in
order

order to maintain *truth* ; but you never need part with *love*. Be you herein followers of Christ and St. Paul. You know that the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Devil himself, would gladly have made peace with those two champions of the truth, upon the scandalous terms of betraying and giving her up. But St. Paul had not so learned Christ, and our Lord scorned to deny himself the Truth, and to worship the Father of lies. See how calmly, how lovingly, how resolutely they fight this good, this bloody fight of faith. Volleys of invectives and calumnies have already been thrown out against them ; and now, reproving their persecutors, and yet praying for them, they go and meet bonds and prisons, the stocks and the scourge, the provoking taunt and the cruel mocking, the bloody sword and the ignominious cross. And how many stand by them in their extremity ? Have ye forgotten the amazing number ? *They ALL forsook him and fled—ALL men forsook me, I pray God it may not be laid to their charge.* And, astonishing ! Judas, Peter, and Demas led the van.—O Jesus, stand by our weakness, and we will stand by thy truth. Thou sayst, *will ye also go away ?* And *to whom should we go*, gracious Lord : *Hast thou not the words of Truth, the words of everlasting life ?* Art thou not *the light of the world and the life of men ?* Our light, and our life ? Could all the *ignes fatui* in the professing world ; could even all the *stars* in thy church, supply the want of thy light to our souls ? No, Lord ; Be then our sun and shield for ever. Visit the earth again, thou uncreated Sun of righteousness and truth : Halten thy second advent : Thy kingdom come ! Shine without a cloud ! Scatter the last remains of Error's night ! Kindle our minds into pure truth ! our hearts into perfect love ! our tongues into ardent praise ! our lives into flaming obedience !

Bold

Bold may we wax, exceeding bold,
 No more to Error's ways conform,
 Nor shrink thy hardest *Truths* t'unfold,
 But more than meet the gathering storm.

Adverse to earth's erroneous throng,
 May each now turn his fearless face ;
 Stand as an iron pillar strong,
 And steadfast as a wall of brass.

Give us thy might, thou God of pow'r,
 Then let or men, or fiends assail ;
 Strong in thy strength, we'll stand a tow'r,
 Impregnable to earth or hell.

A N

A P P E N D I X

To prevent objections.

TO plead for *Error* in an Essay on *Truth* would be preposterous. If I have done it, it has been inadvertently ; and I shall be thankful to any of my readers, who will be at the trouble to set me right. But I once more beg forward disputants, not to produce assertions and invectives, instead of arguments and well-applied scriptures ; and not to wire-draw the controversy by still urging objections, which I have already directly or indirectly answered ; unless they show, that such answers are insufficient ; that my arguments are inconclusive ; and the scriptures I quote, misapplied. Two of those objections however, deserve a more direct and fuller answer.

I. Should

I. Should it be said, " I puzzle people by asserting
 " that there can be any other saving faith, but the
 " *christian* faith ; and any other *object* of saving faith
 " but *Christ crucified* : " I reply, that, tho' *Christ crucified* is the capital object of *my* faith, I dare not admit the *contracted* notions, that the Solifidians have of faith : because, if I did, I should subscribe to the *necessary* damnation of three parts of my fellow-sinners out of four ; and reject Christ's word, under pretence of exalting his person : Take a few more instances of it.

Did not our Lord himself say to his disciples, *Have faith in God* ; distinguishing *that* faith, from faith in himself, as mediator, John xvii. 3 ? Does not St. Paul declare, that, as *believing GOD was imputed to Abraham for righteousness* ; so it shall be imputed to us, if we believe on HIM, that raised up *Jesus our Lord from the dead* ? Do I " forge " the following scriptures ? *The righteousness of God is revealed from FAITH to FAITH — According to the PROPORTION of faith — According as God hath dealt the MEASURE of faith. — If I have told you of EARTHLY things, and ye BELIEVE not ; how shall ye BELIEVE, if I tell you of HEAVENLY things ? — And can we read Heb. xi. without seeing, that the faith there described, is more general than the faith, which characterizes the christian dispensation ? By what art can we make appear, that Christ crucified was the object of those believers, of whom the apostle says, By faith Noah moved with fear built an ark : — By faith Isaac blessed Jacob AND ESAU [the supposed reprobate] concerning things to come : — By faith Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph : — By faith Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones : — By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies ? If you insinuate with respect to Rahab, that Joshua sent the spies, whom she entertained, and that they informed her, that Joshua was a type of Christ crucified : will you not render your " orthodoxy " as ridiculous, as if you rested it upon the frivolous difference there is between *if* and *is* ? Mr. B. cannot show, that the apostle ever*

distinguished between a *jewish* IF, and a *christian* IF ; but I can quote chapter and verse, when I assert, that he clearly distinguishes between *jewish* and *christian* faith. For, not to transcribe Heb. viii. and x. does he not say, Gal. iii. 23, BEFORE FAITH [i. e. before *christian* faith] *came, we were kept under the law, i. e. under the jewish dispensation, and the obscurer faith peculiar to it: Nor was this a damnable state, for St. Paul begins the next chapter by telling us, that The HEIR, as long as he is a CHILD, differeth nothing from a SERVANT, tho' he be LORD OF ALL; but is under tutors, and governors, till the time appointed of the Father: Even so we, when we were children [when we were under the jewish dispensation] were in bondage under the elements of this world. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we [children differing nothing from servants] might receive the adoption of sons, i. e. the privileges of sons that are of age, and are no longer under tutors and governors. — For after that (christian) FAITH is come, we are no longer under a school-master, for we are all the [emancipated] children of God by FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS: Gal. iii. 25, 26. Is it not evident from the comparing of these passages, that the faith of Jews constituted them children of God, but such children as in general differed nothing from servants — such children as were in a state of nonage and bondage: Whereas christian faith [emphatically called faith] by its superior privileges introduces true christians into the glorious liberty of the adult sons of God? Before we can overthrow this doctrine, must we not, to use St. Peter's words, wrest our beloved brother Paul's words, so as to overthrow the FAITH of some, yea of all the Jews, that lived before faith came, i. e. before Christ brought believers from mount Sinai to mount Sion; from the earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children, to the new Jerusalem, which is free, and is the mother of us all — that stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made*

made us free, and are not intangled again with the yoke of bondage?

The difference between the privileges of the jewish, and those of the christian faith and dispensation, is still more clearly described, 2 Cor. iii. There, the christian dispensation [called *the ministration of the Spirit*, because *the promise of the Spirit* is its great privilege, see John vii. 39,] is opposed to the jewish dispensation, which the apostle calls *the ministration of condemnation*, because it appointed no particular sacrifices for penitents guilty of adultery, idolatry, murder, blasphemy, &c. and absolutely doomed them to die. This severe dispensation, says St. Paul, *was glorious, tho' it is done away: much more that which remaineth* [the christian dispensation] *exceedeth in glory.* — Again, *Moses put a typical veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end, &c. and until this day the veil remaineth untaken away, &c. But we (Christians) all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.* What a privilege! And how many nominal christians live below it; yea below the privileges of the very Heathens!

This however is the *one faith* of true christians, who *have the same spirit of faith*: It is *one*, in its great object, *God manifest in the flesh*—*one*, in its great promise, *the promise of the Father, or the kingdom in the Holy Ghost*—*one*, in its new commandment, brotherly, universal love, that *perfects* believers *in one*, and makes them partakers of *so great salvation.* — This is the faith, which St. Paul calls *the faith of God's elect*, i. e. the faith of christians, who are *chosen* above jewish believers to *see the glory of the Lord with open face*, when jewish believers see it only *darkly thro' a veil*: This very faith he calls immediately after the faith *common* to all Christians, *To Titus, my own son after the common faith*, Tit. i. 1, 4. With an eye to *this faith* he likewise names *Timothy, his own son in the FAITH* — *which is in Christ Jesus*: A faith this, whereby Timothy, who was a jewish believer from a child, was *made partaker*

of Christ the great [i. e. the christian] *salvation*. — A faith, which St. Peter calls *like precious faith*, and St. Jude, a *most holy faith*; indirectly comparing it to the *most holy* place in the temple. — A faith, which Christ calls *MY faith*, Rev. ii. 13, and *faith that is in ME*, Acts xxvi. 18. — A faith this, far superior to the faith of the *noble* jewish believers in Berea, who so candidly searched the scriptures, when they had heard St. Paul preach — and very far exceeding the candid disposition of those sincere Heathens at Corinth, concerning whom our Lord said to St. Paul, † *I have much people in this city*. If the reader divests himself of prejudices, I hope, that, instead of calling the doctrine of the gospel dispensations, and the degrees of faith belonging to them, a “*novel chimera*,” he will embrace, receive it as a *truth*, which leads to a thousand others.

II. Some of my opponents, who find it easier to pass a jest than to answer an argument, will probably think, that to beat me and the doctrine of the dispensations out of the field of truth, they need only laugh at my “*inventing*” different sorts of faith “*by the dozen*.”

To nip this witticism in the bud, I declare ONCE MORE: That I make no more difference between the faith of a righteous Heathen, and the faith of a Father in Christ; than I do between day-break, and meridian light: — That the light of a sincere Jew, is as much one with the light of a sincere Christian; as the light of the sun in a cold, cloudy day, in March, is one with the light of the sun in a fine day, in May:

X 3

—And

† I prefer this sense to that of the Calvinists, not only because unconditional election to eternal glory appears to me an unscriptural doctrine; but because the apostle, having named the sins, in which *all wicked* Heathens lived, says to the Corinthians, *Not such were you ALL*, but *such were SOME of you*; intimating that *others* were of those righteous people, concerning whom our Lord speaks when he says, *Enquire who is worthy*. Let it be observed however that we do not rest our doctrine of free grace, upon this or upon any one scripture brought in by the bye, and rather by way of illustration than of proof. We have passages enough that are *full* to the point.

a— And, that the difference between the saving faith peculiar to the sincere disciples of Noah, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, consists in a variety of *degrees*, and not in a diversity of *species*; saving faith under all the dispensations agreeing in the following essentials: (1) It is begotten by the revelation of some saving truth presented by free grace, impressed by the Spirit, and received by the believer's prevented free-agency: (2) It has the same original cause in all, that is, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ: (3) It *actually* saves all, tho' in various degrees: (4) It sets all upon *working righteousness*; *some bearing fruit thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold*: And (5) thro' Christ it will bring all that do not make shipwreck of it, to one or another of the *many mansions*, which our Lord is gone to prepare in heaven for his *believing, obedient* people, i. e. for those who get clear of practical *pharisaism* and *antinomianism*.

III. Should it be objected, that "The doctrine of *this* Essay confounds Faith and Works;" to what I have said on this head in the preceding Checks, I add: —(1) There is an essential difference between the holy faith of Adam in a state of innocence; and the justifying, sanctifying faith of a penitent sinner: For Adam *only* stood and worked by faith in God as *Creator*; but we rise, stand, and work, *chiefly* by faith in God as *Redeemer* and *Sanctifier*. See the note p. 4. — (2) Adam worked upon the terms of the *first* covenant, which requires innocence and perfect obedience; and we work upon the terms of the *second*, which, for Christ's sake, admits the sincere obedience of penitential faith. Here is then no mixing of the covenants, no confounding of faith and works; but only a vindication of the works of faith, and a defending of the faith that works by love. See p. 61, note 21; p. 65, note 23; and p. 33, note 5. — (3) St. Augustine, the favourite Father of the Solifidianians, wrote a Treatise (*De fide et operibus*.) upon faith and works, in the 21st chapter of which, he has these words: "By believing in God
" with a right faith, by worshipping and knowing
X 3 " him,

“ him, we are so far benefited (*ut et bene vivendi ob illo sit nobis auxilium, et si peccaverimus ab illo indulgentiam* MEREAMUR) as to obtain from him help “ to live well, and to get of him ” (for I must not literally translate the heretical word *mereamur*) “ a “ pardon, if we have sinned.” — And chap. 23, he adds, “ *Inseparabilis est bona vita a fide quæ per dilectionem operatur : imo vero ea ipsa est bona vita* : A “ good life is inseparable from the faith, which works “ by love ; nay, that faith itself is a good life.” Had I spoken so unguardedly, there would be just room for raising the objection which I prevent ; but I have carefully distinguished between faith and works ; representing faith as the *beating of the heart*, and works as the *pulses* caused thereby ; and holding forth faith as the *root*, and works as the *fruit* of evangelical obedience. See p. 180, &c.

IV. If some readers think that my views of *Truth* are *singular*, I reply, that when I have reason and scripture on my side, I am not afraid of *singularity*. However, as I should be glad to obviate even this objection, I shall present the reader with the sentiments of two of the most judicious divines of the last century, Mr. Flavel and Mr. Goodwin.

Mr. Flavel says in his *Discourse on mental Errors*,
 ‘ Truth † is the proper object, the natural and pleasant food of the understanding. *Doth not the ear* (that is, the understanding by the ear) *try words, as the mouth tasteth meat ?* — The minds of all that are not wholly immersed in sensuality, spend their strength in the laborious search and pursuit of Truth. — Fervent prayer, sedulous study, fixed meditations, are the labours of inquisitive souls after Truth. — Answerable to the sharpness of the mind’s appetite, is the fine edge of pleasure and delight it feels in the discovery and acquisition of Truth.—If Archimedes, upon the discovery of a mathematical truth was so ravished, that he cried out *Eureka, Eureka*, I have found it, I have found it ; what pleasure must
 ‘ the

† I produce this as an EXTRACT, and not as a continued quotation.

the discovery of a divine Truth give to a sanctified
 soul ! *Thy words were found of me*, says Jeremiah,
and I did eat them ; and thy word was to me the joy
and rejoicing of my heart.—Truth lies deep, *Veritas*
in puteo, ‘ as the rich veins of gold do ; if we will
 get the treasure, we must not only *beg* but *dig* also.
 —We are not to take up with what lies uppermost,
 and next at hand upon the surface. — *Be ye trans-*
formed by the renewing of your mind, that you may
prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will
of God.—It is a very great judgment of God to be
 given over to an erroneous mind. For the under-
 standing being the leading faculty, as that guides,
 the other powers of the soul follow ; as horses in a
 team follow the fore-horse. Now how sad and dan-
 gerous a thing is this, for Satan to ride the fore-
 horse, and guide that, which is to guide the life of
 man ? That is a dreadful, spiritual, judicial stroke
 of God, which we read of Rom. 1. 26. — 2 Thes.
 ii. 10. *Because they received not the love of the Truth,*
God gave them up to strong delusions. They are justly
 plagued with Error, that slight truth. — Besides,
 what shame and trouble must it be to the zealous
 promoters of errors, not only to cast away their own
 time and strength, but also to ensnare and allure
 the souls of others into the same, or worse mischief :
 for tho’ God may save and recover you, those that
 have been misled by you, may perish.’

Mr. Goodwin thus confirms Mr. Flavel’s noble tes-
 timony, in the preface to his *Redemption Redeemed*.
 TRUTH is for the understanding, and the under-
 standing for Truth — Truth, especially in things of
 a supernatural concernment, the knowledge whereof
 faceth eternity, &c. being nothing else (interpre-
 tatively) but GOD himself prepared, of, and by, him-
 self, for a beatifical union with the understanding,
 and from hence, with the heart and affections of
 men ; ERROR, in things of this high import, can
 be nothing else but SATAN, contriving and distilling
 himself into a notion, or impression likely to be ad-
 mitted

'mitted by the understanding, under the appearance
 'and in the name of *Truth*, into union with itself,
 'and by means hereof, into union with the heart of
 'men. — All Error (of that kind I now speak of)
 'being seated in the understanding, secretly and by
 'degrees infuseth a proportionable malignity into
 'the will and affections, and occasioneth unholy dis-
 'positions. Error is the great Troubler of the world.
 'It is that fountain of death, that sendeth out all
 'those streams of sin, which overflow the earth. —
 'Why do men so universally walk in ways of op-
 'pression, deceit, drunkenness, uncleanness, envy,
 'pride, &c. but because they judge such ways as
 'these (all circumstances considered) more desirable
 'to them, than ways of a contrary import. And what
 'is this, but a most horrid error and mistake, the re-
 'sult of those lying apprehensions concerning God,
 'wherewith men willingly suffer their minds to be
 'corrupted even to spiritual putrefaction. — Neither
 'could the Devil have touched Adam or Eve but by
 'the mediation of some erroneous notion or other,
 'concerning God.' — And in his dedicatory epistle
 to the University of Cambridge he hath this fine
 thought, which I address to my readers, 'If you con-
 'demn, who will justify? Only God's eldest Daugh-
 'ter, TRUTH, has one mightier than *you* on her side,
 'who will justify her in due time, tho' you should
 'condemn her; and will raise her up from the dead
 'the third day, in case you shall slay her.'

V. "By granting, that people, who are under
 "dispensations inferior to christianity in its state of
 "perfection, may have a degree of saving faith,
 "altho' they have not yet the luminous faith of
 "christian believers; you damp the exertion of *seek-*
 "ers; and invite them to settle, as most dissenters
 "do, in a lukewarm, Laodicean state, short of as-
 "surance and *the kingdom of God*, which consists not
 "only in *righteousness*, but in *peace and joy by the*
 "*Holy Ghost*."

If

If this objection could not be answered, I would burn my Essay ; for I had much rather, it should feed my fire, than the Laodicean spirit, which is already so predominant in the church : But, that this new difficulty is by no means unanswerable, will appear, I hope, by the following observations.

(1) Judicious Mr. Baxter, by a variety of strong arguments, shows, that to represent assurance, or the kingdom of God in the Holy Ghost, as essential to all true faith ; and promiscuously to shut up in a state of damnation all those, to whom that *kingdom* is not yet *come with power*, is both cruel and unscriptural. See the arguments in his *Confession of Faith*, from p. 189 to 214.

(2) Ought we to keep from those, who sincerely seek the kingdom of God, the comfort that the gospel allows them ? Are not *they, that seek the Lord*, commanded to *rejoice* ? And how can they do it, if *the wrath of God abideth on them*, as it certainly does on all *absolute* unbelievers ? Did not our Lord and St. Peter speak in a more evangelical strain, when they said to sincere seekers, *Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom of grace, as well as that of glory.* — *The promise of the kingdom in the Holy Ghost is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call to believe explicitly in Jesus Christ ?*

(3) When Joshua urged the Israelites to cross Jordan, would he have done right, if he had made them believe, that they were still in Egypt, and had not yet taken one true step towards Canaan ? Did he not encourage them to go up, and to possess the good land by the very consideration, which my objector supposes would have made them sit down in the wilderness ? Nay, did not those, who had already taken possession of the kingdoms of Ogg and Sihon, on the other side Jordan, cross that river first, and nobly lead the van, when their brethren went on from conquering to conquer ? And why should not spiritual Israelites, who turn their back upon spiritual Egypt, and
seek

seek the kingdom of God, be led on *from faith to faith*, in the same comfortable manner ?

(4) It is trifling to say, “ *Dead Dissenters*, and the *formal* Scotch clergy, preach up a faith short of christian assurance, and therefore such a faith is a dangerous chimera ;” for if they preach it in an unguarded, or in a careless manner, to set aside and not to illustrate the doctrine of *christian* faith, they do the devil’s work, and not the work of evangelists ; what wonder is it then, that such preaching should lull their congregations asleep ?—Again, if we ought not to give up the doctrine of *sincere obedience* and *good works*, tho’ our opponents cry out perpetually, “ It is the doctrine of all the carnal clergy in the kingdom :” —and if it is our duty to maintain the doctrine of the *Trinity*, tho’ Dr. Priestley and all the unitarians say with great truth, That “ It is the doctrine of the superstitious Papists ;” how absurd is it to urge, that our doctrine concerning a faith inferior to the faith of assurance, is false, merely because the objector says, that this part of our doctrine is held by all the *sleepy* Dissenters ? Might we not, at this rate, be also ashamed of the doctrine of the divine Unity, which the Socinians, the Jews, and even the Turks hold as well as we ?

(5) Are there not many pious and judicious ministers, in the churches of England and Scotland, as well as among the Dissenters, who dare not countenance the present revival of the power of godliness, chiefly because they hear us sometimes unguardedly assert, that none have any faith, but such as have the faith of assurance ; and that the wrath of God actually abides on all those, who have not that faith ? If we warily allowed the faith of the inferior dispensations, which such divines clearly see in the scriptures, and feel in themselves ; would not their prejudices be softened, and their minds prepared to receive what we advance in defence of the faith of assurance ?

(6) If it is urged, that the Spirit of God witnesses to all sincere seekers of the kingdom in the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, that they are in a damnable state, till they feel the pardoning *love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them* ; I demand proof ; I deny the fact, and assert, that the divine Spirit can no more witness to an *accepted*, mourning Cornelius, that he is *not accepted* in any sense, than it can witness to a palpable contradiction. The truth is, Our unbelieving fears and awakened hearts are very prone to surmise the worst, and we are very apt to take their surmisings for divine impressions, even when we *bring forth fruits worthy of repentance*. I doubt not but St. Paul himself, in his agony of penitential grief, when he spent three days and three nights in fasting and prayer, had many such gloomy despairing thoughts ; but they were certainly lying thoughts, as well as those, which David wisely checks in some of his psalms. Who will dare to say, that Ananias found the apostle in a *damnable* state, tho' he found him without the sense of sin forgiven, as appears from the direction which he gave him, *Arise, why tarriest thou ? Why starvest thou thyself to death ? Wash away thy sins, calling upon, and consequently BELIEVING in the name of the Lord ?*

(7) My objector's argument is as much levelled at St. Paul's doctrine, as at my Essay. *Men and brethren, &c.* said he to his audience at Antioch, *whosoever among you FEARETH God, to you is the word of THIS SALVATION sent*, Acts xiii. 26. But none of the *pious* hearers, whom he thus addressed, were unwise enough to reply, ' Thou acknowledgest that we *fear God* ; ' and David says, *BLESSED is the man, that FEARETH the Lord* : Now, if we fear him, and are *blessed*, ' we are already in a state of salvation, and therefore ' need not " THIS SALVATION " which thou preach- ' est. If we see our way by the candle of Moses, as ' thou intimatest, what need is there, that *the sun of ' righteousness should arise upon us with healing in his ' wings ?* ' I demand proof therefore, that men, who *fear God* in our day, are readier to draw pernicious inferences

inferences from the doctrine of the dispensations, than they were in St. Paul's time.

(8) The objection which I answer, may with equal propriety be urged against St. Peter's doctrine. Acts ii. 5, and x. 7, we read of *DEVOUT men out of every nation under heaven*, and of a *DEVOUT soldier*, that *waited continually on Cornelius*, who himself *feared God, worked righteousness, and was accepted—with all his house*. By Acts xi. 9, 14. it evidently appears, that tho' Cornelius *was cleansed by God himself*, yet he must *send for Peter*, who was to *tell him words whereby he and all his house SHOULD BE SAVED*, i. e. should become partakers of the *GREAT salvation* revealed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. But altho' St. Peter began his discourse by acknowledging, that his pious hearers *were accepted with God*, none of the congregation said: Well, if we *are accepted*, we are already in a state of salvation, and therefore we need not *hear words, whereby we shall be saved*. On the contrary, they all *BELIEVED the word of THIS fuller salvation*; for the *Holy Ghost fell on ALL them, that heard the word*, and St. Paul informs us, that we *receive the Spirit by the hearing of FAITH*. Compare Acts x. 44, with Gal. ii. 3, and John vii. 39. It is plain, from this account, that no preaching was ever attended with a more *universal* blessing, and that no discourse was ever more instrumental in conveying to all, the power of the faith of assurance, than that very sermon, which the apostle began by intimating, that his hearers were already *accepted*, according to an inferior dispensation. Hence it is evident, that the doctrine we maintain, if it is properly guarded, far from having a *necessary* tendency to lull people asleep, is admirably calculated to excite every penitent to faith, prayer, the improvement of their talent, and the *perfecting of holiness*.

(9) May we not sufficiently guard the *christian* dispensation, by constantly affirming: (1) That all *christian* believers *have now the witness in themselves*: — (2) That those, who have it not, either never had
christian

christian faith, which is emphatically called *faith* in the gospel, [see Acts xiv. 27.] or, that they know only *the baptism of John*; or, that with the unsettled Galatians, they are actually *fallen from grace*, i. e. from the christian dispensation; and now live *under the law*, i. e. in the darkness of the jewish dispensation; supposing they are not quite departed from God by indulging known sin. — (3) That if they do not press after the faith of assurance, they are in the utmost danger of losing their talent of grace; like the young man, whom Jesus loved, and who nevertheless went away sorrowful, when he was unwilling to give up all, and follow Jesus without reserve; or like those thousands of Israelites, *whom the Lord saved out of the land of Egypt, and whom he afterwards destroyed*, when they believed not the word, by which they were to be *SAVED INTO* the land of promise? Jude 5.

(10) Not to mention all the arguments, by which the zealous puritans defended the doctrine of assurance in the last century, and those by which the Methodists prove its *necessity* in our days; is not the first argument used in my address to the anti-christian moralist, p. 215, sufficient, if it is properly managed, to enforce the absolute *necessity* of rising to higher dispensations, when God calls us to it? If queen Vashti lost her crown, for *refusing to come to* the royal banquet, at *the king's commandment*: — If those, who *begged to be excused*, when they were invited to the gospel-feast, were at last dreadfully punished: — If St. Paul says to loitering believers, who are backward to go on to perfection, *How shall we escape if we neglect so GREAT salvation, which at FIRST began to be spoken by the Lord*: — Nay, if Christ himself threatens to *spue lukewarm, slothful Laodiceans out of his mouth*; do we want even *terrifying* arguments to lash the consciences of those carnal professors, who, hoping they are perfectly safe in their *low* attainments, despise *higher* dispensations, and *bury their talent of grace*, till it is *taken from them*, and given to those who best improve their own? To conclude,

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(11) You

(11) You are afraid, that the doctrine of this Essay will make "*Seekers*" rest in Laodicean lukewarmness; but, permit me to observe, that the *Seekers* you speak of, are either forward hypocrites, or sincere penitents:—If they are *forward hypocrites*, preaching to them the *faith of assurance* will never make them either humble or sincere. On the contrary, they will probably catch at an *election*, and then at an *assurance* of their own making; and so they will profess to have the faith, for which you contend, when in fact they have only the name and notion of it. The religious world swarms with instances of this kind.—If, on the other hand, the *Seekers* for whom you seem concerned, are *sincere penitents*; far from being hurt, they will be greatly benefited by our doctrine: for it will at once keep them from chilling, despairing fears; and from false, Crispian comforts; the two opposite extremes, into which upright, unwary mourners are most apt to run. Thus our doctrine, instead of being dangerous to sincere seekers, will prove a scriptural clue, in following which they will happily avoid the gloomy haunts of *pharisaic* Despair, and the enchanted ground of *antinomian* Presumption.

T H E E N D.



SECOND APPENDIX.

Containing, (1) *Ten more Arguments to prove, that all men universally, in the day of their visitation, have SOME gracious power to believe SOME saving truth.*
 —And (2) *An answer to three more objections.*

BEING conscious that I cannot be too careful, and guarded, in writing upon so important, and delicate a subject as that of the preceding Essay; I once more take up the pen to explain, strengthen, and guard the doctrine that it contains.

I. I have said p. 143 that *Faith* [considered in general] *is believing heartily*; I add, *and sometimes it may signify a power to believe heartily*. For, as God gives to all the heathens in the day of their visitation, *a power to believe heartily that God is, &c.* indulging them with gracious calls and opportunities to use that power; we may say, that he gives them *the faith* of their dispensation. Nevertheless all the heathens have not *that* faith: For many obstinately bury their talent, till at last it is taken from them.

As this doctrine of *faith* entirely subverts the doctrine of *finished damnation*, which is so closely connected with the doctrines of *absolute election*, and finished salvation: and as a Calvinist clergyman, who has seen part of this Essay, assures me that it shall be taken notice of; I beg leave to add the following arguments to those, which I have produced p. 145, to prove, that *Faith is not* the work of God in the sense of our adversaries, and that in the day of salvation, thro' *the free gift, which is come upon all men*, we have all *some* gracious power to believe *some* saving truth.

(1) If faith is the work of God in the same sense, in which the creation is his performance, when Christ *marvelled at the Centurion's faith*, he marvelled, that God should be able to do what he pleases, or that a man should do what he can no more help doing, than

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he

he can hinder the world from existing : That is, he marvelled at what was not at all marvellous : and he might as well have wondered that a tun should outweigh an ounce.

(2) When God invites *EVERY creature in all the world* to believe, [Mark xvi. 15.] if he denies most of them power so to do, he insults over their wretched impotence, and acts a part which can hardly be reconciled with sincerity. What would the world think of the king, if he perpetually invited *all* the Irish poor over to England to partake of his royal charity, and took care that *most* of them should *never* meet with any vessels to bring them over, but such as would be sure to founder in the passage.

(3) When our Lord endeavoured to shame the pharisees for their unbelief, he said, *John came to you, &c. and ye believed him not, but the publicans and harlots believed him : and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe.* But if faith is the work of God in the sense of our adversaries, was it any shame to the pharisees, that God would not do *his own work* ? Had they any more reason to blush at it, than we have to redden, because God does not give us wings and fins as he does to birds and fishes ?

(4) To suppose that Christ assiduously preached the gospel to the inhabitants of Capernaum, whilst all the time he withheld from them power to believe it, and that afterwards he appointed them a *more intolerable* damnation for not believing : — To suppose this, I say, is to cast the most horrible reflection upon the Lamb of God. But if it is allowed, that those obstinate unbelievers will *justly* be sent into a *more dreadful* hell, for having buried to the end their talent of power to believe in their *stronger* light ; is it not reasonable to suppose, that those who shall go to a *less* intolerable hell, will also be sent there for having finally refused to use their talent of power to believe in their *weaker* light ?

(5) Altho' Christ positively says, that men shall be damned for their unbelief : [See John iii. 18, Mark xvi,

xvi. 16.] yet, some of our adversaries deny it; being deservedly-ashamed of representing our Lord as damning myriads of men for not doing what is absolutely impossible. Hence they tell us, that reprobates shall be damned only for their *sins*. But this unscriptural contrivance does not mend the matter; for I have shewn, Section vii, that bad works, or sins, *necessarily* flow from unbelief. Now, unbelief being nothing but the absence of faith; God, by absolutely withholding all saving faith, *necessarily* causes all unbelief; and unbelief, by *necessarily* causing all sin, *necessarily* causes also all damnation. For he that absolutely withholds all light, *necessarily* causes all darkness, and of course all the works of darkness. Thus “*the doctrines of grace*” [so called] that seem to rear their *graceful* head to heaven, end in the *graceless*, venomous tail of *finished damnation*. “*Definit in piscem mulier formosa superne.*”

(6) The design of the gospel, with regard to God, is evidently to *extol his grace*, and *clear his justice*. Now, if an absolute decree of preterition, or limited redemption, hinders a vast majority of mankind from believing to salvation, both those ends of the gospel are entirely defeated in all that perish: For God, by passing by the reprobated culprits thousands of years before they were born, and by withholding every dram of *saving grace* from them, shows himself an *absolutely-graceless* Creator to them all. Nor does this opinion less horribly impeach God’s *justice* than his *grace*; for it represents him as judicially sentencing men to eternal torments, merely for the sin of a man whom most of them never heard of; or, which is all one, for the *necessary, unavoidable, pre-ordained* consequences of that sin.

(7) St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, takes particular care to clear God’s justice with respect to the condemnation of the wicked, *that every mouth may be stopped*—and [εἰς το εἶναι] *that they may be without excuse*. But the scheme which I oppose, instead of leaving men ἀναπολογητους *without excuse*, opens their

mouhth, and fills them with the best *apology* in the world, “ *Absolute necessity, and complete impossibility*, caused by another before we were born : ” An *apology* this, which no candid person can ever object to.

(8) Agreeably to St. Paul’s doctrine our Lord observes, that the man sentenced to be cast into outer darkness for *not having on a wedding garment, was speechless*. But if the Crispian doctrines of grace are true, might not that man, with the greatest propriety, have said to the Master of the feast, while the executioners *bound him hand and foot* ? “ To all eternity I shall impeach thy justice, O thou partial judge. Thou appointest me the hell of hypocrites, merely because *I have not on a wedding garment*, which thou hast from all eternity purposely kept from me, under the strong lock and key of thy irreversible decrees. Is this the manner in which thou judgest the world in righteousness ? ”

(9) The parable of the *talents*, and that of the *pounds* decide the question. The wicked and slothful servants, whose destruction they inform us of, are not condemned because their master was “ hard and austere : ” but because the one had *buried his talent of power in the earth*, and the other had *hid his pound of grace in a napkin* manufactured at Laodicea.

(10) If salvation depends upon faith, and if God never gives reprobates power to *believe in the light that enlightens every man*, and a sufficiency of means so to do ; it follows, that he never gives them any *personal* ability to escape damnation ; but only to secure and increase their damnation : and thus he deals far harder with them than he did with devils. For Satan and his angels were all *personally* put in a state of initial salvation, and endued with a *personal* ability to do that, on which their eternal salvation depended. To suppose therefore, that a majority of the children of Adam, who are born sinful without any *personal* fault of their own, and who can say to the *incarnate* Son of God, “ Thou art flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, and bone of our bone — to suppose, I say, that a vast majority of these favoured creatures have far less fa-

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your shown them, than Beelzebub himself had, is so *graceless*, so *unevangelical* a doctrine, that one might be tempted to think, it is *ironically* called *the doctrine of grace*; and to suspect, that its defenders are stiled "*evangelical ministers*" by way of *burlesque*.

From the preceding arguments I conclude, that, when it is said in the scriptures, people **COULD NOT believe**, this is to be understood, either of persons, whose day of grace was over, and who of course were justly *given up to a reprobate mind*, as the men mentioned Rom. i. 21, 28: Or of persons, who, by not using their one talent of power to believe the obvious truths belonging to a lower dispensation, absolutely incapacitated themselves to believe the deep truths belonging to christianity.

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II. Altho' I flatter myself, that the preceding arguments guard the doctrine of *free-grace* against the attacks of those, who indirectly contend for *free-wrath*; I dare not yet conclude this appendix. Still fearful lest some difficulty unremoved will prejudice the candid reader against what appears to me to be the truth, I beg leave to intrude upon his patience, by answering three more plausible objections to the doctrine of *this Essay*.

OBJ. VI. "If *faith* is the *gift of the God* of GRACE to us, as *fight* is the *gift of the God* of NATURE, according to your assertion, p. 146; does it not follow, that as we may see when we will, so we may believe in Christ — believe the forgiveness of our sins; and, by that means, fill ourselves with *peace* and *joy in the Holy Ghost* when we have a mind? But is not this contrary to experience? Do not the best christians remember a time, when they could no more believe than they could make a world, tho' they prayed for *faith* with all the ardor they were capable of?"

ANS. (1) You still seem to take it for granted, that there is no true faith, but an explicit *faith* IN CHRIST; and

and no explicit faith in Christ, but the *faith of full assurance*. But I hope, that I have already proved the contrary in my answer to the Vth objection, p. 237. There are two extremes in the doctrine of faith, which should be carefully avoided by every christian: The one is that of the Author of P. O. who thinks, that an adulterous murderer may have true, saving faith in the height of his complicated crimes: And the other is that of Mr. Jonathan Ketlow, who asserts, There is no saving faith but that which has actually cleansed us from all inbred sin, and opened a present heaven in our breast. The middle path of truth lies exactly between the opposite mistakes of those two good men; and that path I endeavour to point out.

As on the one hand it never came into my mind, that an impenitent murderer can have even the saving faith of a heathen: so on the other hand it never entered my thoughts, that a penitent can believe with the faith of full assurance when he will: For *this* faith depends not only upon our general belief of the truth revealed to us, but also upon a peculiar † *operation of God*

† Mr. Wesley exactly describes *this faith* in his sermon on *Scriptural Christianity*, of which you have here an extract. ‘By *THIS faith* of the operation of God, which was the very substance or subsistence of things hoped for, the demonstrative evidence of invisible things, he’ (the penitent pricked to the heart, and expecting the promise of the Father) ‘instantly received the Spirit of adoption, whereby he now cried Abba, Father! Now first it was that he could call Jesus Lord by the Holy Ghost, the spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit that he was a child of God. Now it was that he could truly say, I live not but Christ liveth in me, &c. — His soul magnified the Lord, and his spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. He rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father: in whom he had redemption thro’ his blood, the forgiveness of sins. He rejoiced in that witness of God’s spirit with his spirit, that he was a child of God: and more abundantly in hope of the glory of God, &c. The Love of God was also shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, which was given to him. Because he was a son, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son crying Abba, Father! And that filial love of God was continually increased by the witness he had in himself, of God’s pardoning love to him, &c. so that God was the desire of his eyes, and the joy of

God, or revelation of his powerful arm. It is always attended with a *manifestation of the spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirit, that we are the children of God*: And such a manifestation, God in general grants to none but them, that groan deeply under *the spirit of bondage unto fear*, as Paul did while he remained blind at Damascus; — or them that are peculiarly faithful to the grace of their inferior dispensation, and pray as earnestly for *power from on high*, as the apostles did after our Lord's ascension.

Therefore, from my asserting, p. 151, that “ *So long as the day of salvation continues, all sinners, who* ”
 “ *have* ”

‘ of his heart ; his portion in time and in eternity, &c. He that thus
 ‘ loved God, could not but love his brother also, &c. This lover of
 ‘ God embraced all mankind for his sake, &c. not excepting the evil
 ‘ and unthankful, and least of all his enemies, &c. These had a pe-
 ‘ culiar place both in his heart and his prayers. He loved them *even*
 ‘ as *Christ loved us*, &c. By the same almighty love was he saved ;
 ‘ both from passion and pride, from lust and vanity, from ambition
 ‘ and covetousness, and from every temper which was not in Christ,
 ‘ &c. He spake evil of no man ; nor did an unkind word ever come
 ‘ out of his lips, &c. He daily grew in grace, increasing in strength,
 ‘ in the knowledge, and love of God, &c. He visited and assisted
 ‘ them that were sick or in prison, &c. He *gave all his goods to feed*
 ‘ *the poor*. He rejoiced to labour or to suffer for them ; and wherein
 ‘ soever he might profit another, there especially to *deny himself*. —
 ‘ Such was *Christianity* in its rise,’ [i. e. christianity contradistinguished
 ‘ from the dispensation called *the baptism of John*.] ‘ Such was a
 ‘ *christian* in ancient days’ [i. e. a christian contradistinguished from
 ‘ a disciple of John, or of Christ, before the dispensation of the Holy
 ‘ Ghost took place.] ‘ Such was every one of those, who, *when they*
 ‘ *heard the threatnings of the chief priests and elders, lift up their voice*
 ‘ *to God with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghost*.’

I here set my seal to this *scriptural* description of *spiritual christi-
 nity* ; being fully persuaded of two things : (1) That till a man is
 THUS *born of the Spirit*, he cannot see the christian kingdom of God : —
 he cannot be under that glorious dispensation of divine grace, which
 Christ and the apostles spake of, when they preached, *Repent, and be-
 lieve the Gospel, for the kingdom of heaven is AT HAND*. (2) That
 whosoever has not in his breast the above-described kingdom, i. e.
righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and does not bring forth
 its excellent fruits in his life, either never was a *spiritual* christian, or
 is fallen back from the *ministration of the spirit* into the dispensation of
the letter, or the bare form of godliness, if not into open wickedness.
 See the next Note,

“ *have not yet finally hardened themselves, may day and night [thro’ the help and power of the general light of Christ’s GRACE mentioned John i. 9, and Tit. ii. 11.] receive SOME truth belonging to the everlasting gospel,*] which takes in the dispensation OF THE HEATHENS; from my asserting this, I say, you have no reason to infer, that I maintain, any man may day and night believe the forgiveness of his sins, and the deep truths of the gospel OF CHRIST; especially since I mention immediately what truth it is, which all may believe, if they improve their talent, namely this: “ *There is a God, who will call us to an account for our sins, and who spurs us to break them off by repentance.*”

(2) It would be absurd to suppose; that you can believe with the *luminous faith of assurance*, when God is casting your soul into the dark prison of your own guilt, to bring down your pharisaic looks, and make you feel the chains of your sins. But even then, may you not “ *believe, that God is*” just, holy, and patient? May you not acknowledge, that you deserve your spiritual imprisonment far more than Joseph’s brethren deserved to be *put all together into ward three days* by their loving, forgiving brother? May you not believe that, altho’ *heaviness may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning?* And when you have humbly groaned with David, *I am so fast in prison that I cannot get forth*; may you not pray in faith, *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: Let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice: Give me the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: Convince me as powerfully of righteousness, as thou hast of sin: And let thy Spirit, which now acts upon me as a spirit of bondage unto fear, begin to act as a spirit of adoption, and liberty; of righteousness, peace, and joy?* — May you not even add, ‘ O God, I believe thy promise concerning the coming of the Comforter; *help thou my unbelief,* and grant me such a faith as thou wilt vouchsafe to *seal with that holy spirit of promise.* Thou shakest before me the rod of infernal vengeance: I deserve *it a thousand times*; but, O Father of mercies, O my

‘ my Father, if for the sake of thine only begotten Son, thou wilt yet permit such a wretch as I am to call thee *Father*, give me the spirit of adoption; and witness to my spirit, that I am a child of thine. But if thou wilt still hide thy face from me, never suffer me to entertain one dishonourable thought of thee; never let me think thee a Moloch. Tho’ thy justice slay me, let me still trust in thee, and believe, that for Christ’s sake thy mercy will revive my soul?’ Is it scriptural to rank among absolute unbelievers, a penitent who thus humbly and obediently waits for the faith of full assurance—the faith of christianity in its state of perfection? If our Lord pronounces such mourners *blessed*, does it become us to pronounce them *accursed*? but I return to your objection.

(3) The latter part of it confirms, instead of overturning my doctrine; it being evident, that if the persons you speak of, *prayed with ardor for the faith of assurance*, they had already *some degree of faith*; for praying is *calling upon the Lord*, and St. Paul speaks the words of *feebleness*, where he says, *How shall they CALL upon him, in whom they have not BELIEVED?*

(4) I am so far from thinking, our power to believe is *absolute*, that I have asserted, p. 152, “it is *impossible*” heartily to believe the truths, which do not suit our present state:—And p. 168, 169, 179, I have observed, that we *save*ly believe the “*truth suitable to our present circumstances*, WHEN it is kindly presented by FREE GRACE, and affectionately embraced by PREVENTED free-will;” adding that, when we believe, our “*faith is more or less operative*,” not only “*according to the EARNESTNESS with which we*,” (i. e. our prevented free-will) “*welcome the truth to our inmost souls*;” but also, “*according to the POWER with which the spirit of grace impresses it upon our hearts*.”—Nay, I have ascribed so much to the power of the free grace, by which saving faith is “*instantly † formed*,” as to insinuate that sometimes [as at St. Paul’s

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† See p. 168, last line but two.

conversion] this power for a while bears all down before it. This at least was my meaning, when I said p. 147, "*We may IN GENERAL suspend the act of faith; ESPECIALLY when the glaring light*" [i. e. the luminous power] "*that sometimes accompanies the revelation of truth, is abated.*" Consider the force of the words, "*in general,*" and "*especially;*" advert to the exceptions for which they make room; and you will see, I allow, that free-grace, AT TIMES, acts with *almost* as much irresistibility, as some moderate bound-willers contend for.

(5) With respect to my comparison between our power to *believe*, and our power to *see*, far from showing that all men may at any time believe the gospel OF CHRIST, it intimates, nay, it proves the very reverse. Can you see *when* you will, and *what* you will? Can you see in a dark night without a light? Can you see in a bright day, when a thick veil covers your face? Can you see, if you place an opaque body full in your light? Can you see what is out of the reach of your eyes? Can you see the *rising* sun, when you look full *west*, or the stars when you pore upon a dunghill? Can you see when you obstinately shut your eyes? Or when you have let a wicked man put them out, lest you should not live in idleness? Apply to *faith* these queries about *sight*; recollect the preceding observations; and you will perceive: (1) That our power to believe is various ways *circumscribed*; it being impossible, that he, who has but one talent, perhaps unimproved, should carry on as extensive a trade, as the man who diligently improves his five or ten talents: (2) That nevertheless, supposing we have still a ray of the light of truth; and have not yet been given up to judicial blindness, or to final hardness, we may day and night [if we do not still bury our talent] believe, by the above-mentioned helps, *some obvious* truth belonging to the *lowest* dispensation of divine grace, and *begin* to follow our Lord's direction; *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light:* And

(3)

(3) That if we oppose this doctrine, we begin to sneak after our Calvinist brethren into *Crispianity*, and are just ready to bow at the shrine of the great *Diana* of the day, and to kiss her iron-clay feet, *Finished salvation*, and *Finished damnation*.

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OBJ. VII. " Your doctrine concerning the *school* of Faith, and its several *forms* — concerning the *temple* of Faith, and its capital *partitions*, is entirely founded upon the doctrine of the *dispensations* of divine grace; a doctrine this, which many people will rank with what they call, *The novel chimeras of your Checks.*"

I hope, that I have proved what I have advanced concerning the dispensations, by arguments founded upon scripture, reason, and conscience. However, that the idea of *novelty* may not stand in the way of any of my readers, out of fifty authors, whom I might quote in support of this important doctrine, I shall produce two, a calvinist and an anti-calvinist; not doubting but their consentaneous testimony will sufficiently break the force of your objection. The first is the Rev. Mr. Green, late curate of Thurnscoe in Yorkshire, and once an assistant to Mr. Whitefield. In his book, called *Grace and Truth vindicated*, p. 116, you will find the following just remarks :

" It appears to me from *scripture*, as well as *experience*, that there are divers dispensations, but the same spirit : *The kingdom of heaven consists of various degrees, and different mansions.* This is true, whether by the kingdom of heaven we understand the outward professors of religion and their priviledges, the inward kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory : (in all which senses the words in scripture are frequently used.) — As face answers to face in a glass, so do these respectively answer each other. Thus the outward priviledges of religion from Adam to
 • Moses

‘ Moses were *least* ; from Moses to Christ *greater*, and
 ‘ from Christ to the restitution of all things, *greatest*.
 ‘ —Again, to be a spiritual or *enlightened* HEATHEN,
 ‘ as Socrates, Plato, or Cornelius before he heard
 ‘ Peter, is one degree or dispensation of grace. To
 ‘ be a spiritual or *enlightened* JEW ; and with Peter
 ‘ and the other disciples before the day of pentecost,
 ‘ to believe and acknowledge, that Jesus is the Mes-
 ‘ siah, tho’ not *spiritually* come, is a greater. But to
 ‘ be a *spiritual* CHRISTIAN, to have Christ, the ex-
 ‘ alted God-man revealed in us from heaven, and to
 ‘ be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the
 ‘ day of the redemption of this vile body, is the last
 ‘ and most perfect dispensation of grace. He that is
 ‘ feeble here, shall be as David, and he that is strong,
 ‘ &c. shall be, &c. as the angel of the Lord, &c. For
 ‘ it may be observed, that every dispensation admits
 ‘ of a growth therein ; and moreover, that each of
 ‘ them is in some sort and degree experienced by a
 ‘ spiritual christian, &c.’

My second witness is the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley, who
 even in his *first* sermon on *Salvation by faith*, preach-
 ed near forty years ago, clearly distinguishes christian
 faith properly so called, or *faith in Christ* glorified,
 not only from the faith of an heathen, but also from
 the faith of initial christianity, i. e. “ *the faith which
 the apostles had while our Lord was upon earth.*”

‘ And first, says he, it’ [*the faith that saves us into
 the great salvation described in the second part of the ser-
 mon*] ‘ is not barely the faith of an heathen. Now
 ‘ God requires of an heathen to believe, *That God is,*
 ‘ *that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,*
 ‘ &c. by *glorifying him as God,* &c. and by a careful
 ‘ practice of moral virtue, &c. A Greek or Roman
 ‘ therefore, yea, a Scythian or Indian, was without
 ‘ excuse, if he did not believe thus much ; The being
 ‘ and attributes of God, a future state of reward and
 ‘ punishment, &c. For this is barely *the faith of a
 heathen.*’—Soon after he adds : ‘ And herein does it’
 [*this faith in Christ glorified*] ‘ differ from that faith,
 ‘ which

‘ which the apostles themselves had while our Lord
 ‘ was upon earth, that it acknowledges the necessity
 ‘ and merit of his death, and the power of his resur-
 ‘ rection.’

The doctrine of *christian* perfection is entirely
 founded on the privileges of the *christian* dispensa-
 tion in its fulness: privileges these, which far ex-
 ceed those of the jewish œconomy, and the baptism of
 John. Accordingly Mr. Wesley in his sermon on *chris-
 tian perfection* makes the following just and scriptural
 distinction between those dispensations. ‘ It may be
 ‘ granted, (1) That David in the general course of
 ‘ his life, was one of the holiest men among the Jews.
 ‘ And, (2) That the holiest men among the Jews did
 ‘ sometimes commit sin. But if you would hence in-
 ‘ fer, that all christians do, and must commit sin, as
 ‘ long as they live: this consequence we utterly de-
 ‘ ny. It will never follow from those premises. Those
 ‘ who argue thus, seem never to have considered that
 ‘ declaration of our Lord, Mat. xi. 11, *Verily I say*
 ‘ *unto you, among them that are born of women, there*
 ‘ *hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Not-*
 ‘ *withstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven*
 ‘ *is greater than he.* I fear indeed, there are some,
 ‘ who have imagined *the kingdom of heaven* here to
 ‘ mean the kingdom of glory: As if the Son of God
 ‘ had just discovered to us, that the least glorified
 ‘ saint in heaven is greater than any man upon earth!
 ‘ To mention this is sufficiently to refute it. There
 ‘ can therefore no doubt be made, but *the kingdom of*
 ‘ *heaven* here (as in the following verse, where it is
 ‘ said to be *taken by force*) or *the kingdom of God*, as
 ‘ St. Luke expresses it, is that kingdom of God on
 ‘ earth, whereunto all true believers in Christ, all real
 ‘ christians, belong. In these words then our Lord de-
 ‘ clares two things. (1) That before his coming in
 ‘ the flesh, among all the children of men, there had
 ‘ not been one greater than John the Baptist: whence
 ‘ it evidently follows, that neither Abraham, David,
 ‘ nor any Jew, was greater than John. (2) That he

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‘ who is least in the kingdom of God (in that kingdom, which he came to set up on earth, and which the violent now began *to take by force*) is greater than he. Not a *greater prophet* (as some have interpreted the word): for this is palpably false in fact: But greater in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we cannot measure the priviledges of real Christians by those formerly given to the Jews. *Their ministrations* (or dispensation) we allow *was glorious*; but ours *exceeds in glory*. So that whosoever would bring down the christian dispensation to the jewish standard, &c. doth *greatly err, neither knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*’ — From these excellent quotations therefore, it appears, that you do me an honour altogether undeserved, if you suppose, that I first set forth the doctrine of the dispensations.

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OBJ. VIII. “ I cannot help thinking, that the doctrine of a faith proper to all those dispensations is above the capacity of *plain christians*, and should never be mentioned, lest it should puzzle, instead of edifying the Church.”

If your fears are well-grounded, even the apostle’s creed is above the capacity of plain christians: for that creed, the simplest of all those, which the primitive church has handed down to us, evidently distinguishes three degrees of faith: (1) *Faith in God the Father almighty, who made heaven and earth*, which is the faith of the heathens: (2) *Faith in the Messiah, or in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord*; which is the faith of pious jews, of John’s disciples, and of imperfect christians, who, like the apostles before the day of pentecost, are yet strangers to the † great outpouring

† I beg the reader would not mistake me. When I say that pious jews, and our Lord’s disciples before the day of pentecost, were strangers to the *great outpouring* of the Spirit, I do not mean that they were

pouring of the spirit : And (3) *Faith in the Holy Ghost*—Faith of the operation of God, by which christians complete in Christ believe according to the working of God's almighty power, and are filled with righteousness, peace, and joy in THUS believing.

And here honesty obliges me to lay before the public an objection, which I have had for some time against the appendages of the Athanasian Creed. I admire the scriptural manner, in which it sets forth the divine Unity in Trinity, and the divine Trinity in Unity : but I can no longer indiscriminately use its damnatory clauses. It abruptly takes us to the very top of the *christian* dispensation [considered in a doctrinal light.] This dispensation it calls *the catholic Faith* : and, without mentioning the faith of the inferior dis-

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pensations,

were strangers to his directing, sanctifying, and enlivening influences, according to their dispensation. For David had prayed, *Take not thy holy Spirit from me* : John the Baptist had been visited by his exhilarating power, even in his mother's womb : Our Lord had *breathed upon his disciples, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost* ; and had imparted him to them as a *Spirit of grace and supplication*, to help them to wait in faith and unceasing prayer, *till they were endued with power from on high* : Besides, they had called him LORD in truth ; and no man can do this, but by the Spirit of faith, which helps our unbelief and infirmities under all the divine dispensations. Nevertheless they were not fully baptized. The Comforter, that visited them, did not properly dwell in them. Altho' they had already wrought miracles by his power, the Promise of the Father was not yet fulfilled to them. They had not yet been made perfect in one, by the assimilating operation of the heavenly fire. They would have been puzzled by such questions as these : *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? Acts xix. 2.*—*Is he fallen upon you ? Acts x. 44.*—*Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you ? Rom. v. 5.*—*Is the fountain springing up into everlasting life opened in your breast ? John iv. 14.*—*After that ye believed, were ye sealed with that holy Spirit of promise ? Eph. i. 13.*—*That Spirit, which forms those rivers of living water, that flow out of the belly, the inmost soul of believers ?*—*That Spirit which was not given before Christ was glorified ? John vii. 39.*—*That Comforter, which it is more expedient for us to receive, than even to have Christ's bodily presence and constant instructions ? John xv. 7.*—If these, and the like questions would have perplexed the apostles before Christ had opened his spiritual baptism, and set up his kingdom with power in their hearts ; we ought not to be surprized, that professors, who knew only the baptism of John, should ingenuously confess, they never heard

penfations, as our other Creeds do, it makes us declare, that ‘*except “EVERY ONE” keep that faith*’ [the faith of the highest dispensation] ‘*whole and undefiled — he cannot be saved : — without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*’ This dreadful denunciation is true with regard to proud, ungodly infidels, who, in the midst of all the means of *christian* faith, obstinately, maliciously, and finally set their heart against the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; equally despising the Son’s atonement, and the Spirit’s inspiration. But I will no more invade Christ’s tribunal, and pronounce that the fearful punishment of damnation shall “*without doubt*” be inflicted upon “*every*” unitarian, arian, jew, turk, and heathen, *that fears God and works righteousness*, tho’ he does not hold the *faith* of the Athanasian creed *whole*. For, if you except the last article, thousands, yea millions, are never called to hold it AT ALL; and therefore shall never

heard there was an Holy Ghost [to be received] since they believed, Acts xix. 2. Nor should we wonder if devout Jews, and easy Laodicæans did even *mock and say*, You would have us to be filled with *new wine*; but *we are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.* The water of our old cisterns is preferable to the *new wine* of your enthusiastic doctrine, and our baptismal ponds to your baptismal flames.

This however was not Mr. Whitefield’s language when he admitted an *adult* person to baptism; [and he knowingly admitted none but *believers.*] He knew *then* how to pray for the *Promise of the Father*, and how to point the *disciple of John* to the *perfection* of Christ’s dispensation. As a proof of it take part of the truly christian hymn which he sung on that occasion :

ANOINT with HOLY FIRE,
BAPTIZE with PURGING FLAMES
This soul, and with thy grace inspire
In CEASELESS, LIVING STREAMS.

Thy HEAV’NLY UNCTION give,
THY PROMISE, Lord, fulfil,
‘Give Pow’r’ [*i. e. faith*] ‘THY SPIRIT TO RECEIVE,’
And STRENGTH to do thy will.

This good old gospel is far more clearly set forth in Mr. Wesley’s sermon called *Scriptural Christianity*, and in his *Hymns for Whitsunday*, which I earnestly recommend, as pointing out the one thing needful for all carnal professors,

ver perish for not *holding it whole*. See the notes p. 43 and 190. At all hazards then, I hope I shall never use again those damnatory clauses, without taking the liberty of guarding them agreeably to the doctrine of the dispensations. And if Zelores presses me with my subscriptions, I reply before hand, that the same Church, who required me to subscribe to St. Athanasius's Creed, enjoins me also to believe this clause of St. Peter's Creed, *In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him* : And if those two creeds are irreconcilable, I think it more reasonable, that Athanasius should bow to Peter, warmed by the Spirit of love ; than that Peter should bow to Athanasius, heated by controversial opposition.

To return : That the distinction of the three degrees of saving faith omitted in the Athanasian creed, but expressed in the Apostles creed, and in the Nicene creed — That this distinction, I say, is neither chimerical nor enthusiastical, may be proved by a variety of arguments, two or three of which, I hope, will not intrude too long upon the reader's patience.

(1) The first is taken from the doctrine expressly laid down in the new testament. To what I have said on this head, p. 229, &c. I add here what Christ said to his disciples, *Ye believe in GOD, believe also in ME*. Here the most prejudiced, may see, that faith in the FATHER is clearly contradistinguished from faith in the SON. As for faith in the HOLY GHOST, see in what manner our blessed Lord sowed the seed of it in the hearts of his disciples. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, he shall testify of me.—It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart I will send him unto you. — Behold I send THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high*. Nor was this great promise made to the apostles alone ; for, *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If ANY MAN [not if an apostle] thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me,*

as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given ; his dispensation, which is the highest of all, was not yet opened] because that Jesus was not yet glorified. And the opening of this dispensation in our hearts requires on our part, not only faith in Christ, but a peculiar faith in the promise of the Father ; a promise this, which has the Holy Ghost for its great object.

(2) My second argument is taken from the experiences of those, who, by the Holy Ghost, were made partakers of Christ glorified, either on the day of pentecost, or after it ; and could feelingly confess Christ dying for us, and Christ living in us, the hope of glory. Acts ii. 5, we read of devout men out of every nation under heaven, who were come to worship at Jerusalem. But how could they have been devout men, if they had not believed in God ? What could have brought them from the ends of the earth to keep a feast to the Lord, if they had been mere atheists ? And yet it is evident, that thro' prejudice many of them rejected our Lord ; putting him to open shame, and a bloody death : But when Peter preached Christ on the day of pentecost, they at first believed on him with a true, tho' not with a luminous faith. This appears from the anguish, which they felt upon being charged with having slain the prince of life. No man in his senses can be pricked to the heart merely for having had a hand in the just punishment of an impostor, and a blasphemer, who makes himself equal with God. If therefore keen remorse pierced the heart of those penitent Jews, it is evident, that they looked no more upon Christ as an impostor, but already believed in him as the true Messiah.

No sooner had they thus passed from faith in the Father to an explicit faith in the Son, but they cried out, *What shall we do ?* And Peter directed them to make by baptism an open, solemn profession of their faith in Christ, and to believe the great promise concerning the Holy Ghost. *The promise is unto you,* said he : *Be baptized, EVERY ONE OF YOU, in the name*

of

of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ; and ye [every one of you] shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And upon their gladly receiving the word ; i. e. upon their heartily believing the gladdening promise relating to pardon and to the Comforter ; and, no doubt, upon their fervently-praying, that it might be fulfilled in them ; *they were all filled with the Spirit* : all their hearts overflowed with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

St. Peter speaking (Acts xi) of a similar out-pouring of the Spirit, says, *The Holy Ghost fell on them [Gentiles] as on us [Jews] at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water them that entered his dispensation, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, when you shall enter the full dispensation of my Spirit : — God, adds Peter, gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. — And when the apostles heard these things, they glorified God ; not indeed by shouting, “ Then hath God given the Gentiles power to speak arabick ; ” but by saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, according to the fulness of the christian dispensation.*

That this dispensation of the Holy Ghost, this coming of Christ's spiritual kingdom with power, is attended with an uncommon degree of sanctifying grace, is acknowledged by all : And that the gift of tongues, &c. which at first on some occasions, and in some persons, accompanied the baptism of the spirit, for a sign to bigoted jews, or to stupid heathens — that such a gift, I say, was a temporary appendage, and by no means an essential part of Christ's spiritual baptism, is evident from the merely-spiritual effect, which the receiving of the Holy Ghost had upon the penitent jews, who, being *born of water and of the Spirit*, pressed after the apostles into the kingdom of God on the day of pentecost.

‘ Even in the infancy of the church,’ [says an eminent divine] ‘ God divided those’ [miraculous] ‘ gifts with a sparing hand. Were all even then prophets ? Were all workers of miracles ? Had all the’
‘ gifts

' gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues? No, in
' no wife. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Prob-
' ably none but the teachers of the church, and only
' some of them. It was therefore for a more excel-
' lent purpose than this, that *they* the (brethren and
' apostles) *were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. It was
' to give them (what none can deny to be essential
' to all christians in all ages) *the mind which was in*
' *Christ*, those holy fruits of the spirit, which, who-
' soever has not, is none of his: to fill them with
' *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.*'

It is very remarkable, that altho' 3000 converts
received the gift of the Holy Ghost on the memorable
day, in which Christ opened the dispensation of his
spirit, no mention is made of so much as *one* of them
working a *single* miracle, or speaking with *one* new
tongue. But the greatest, and most beneficial of
miracles was wrought upon them all: For, *all that*
believed, says St. Luke, *were together; continuing daily*
with one accord in the temple, breaking bread from house
to house, eating their meat with gladness and singleness
of heart, praising God, and having favour with all
the people; by their humble, affectionate, angelical
behaviour. Or, as the same historian expresses it,
Acts iv. 32, *The multitude of them that believed—spoke*
greek and latin! No, but—were of ONE heart, and
of ONE soul: neither said any of them, that ought of
the things which he possessed was his own; but they had
all things common; having been made perfect in one,
agreeably to our Lord's deep prayer, recorded by St.
John: *Neither pray I for these [my disciples] alone, but*
for THEM also, who shall believe on me thro' their word,
That they may be ONE:—I in them by my spirit, and
thou in me, that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE.

(3) To this argument taken from the experiences of
the primitive christians, I may add, that the doctrine
of the dispensations is indirectly taught by our church
even to children in her catechism, where she instructs
them to say: "By the articles of my belief I learn,
FIRST, to believe in God the Father, who made me, &c.
SECONDLY, in God the Son, who redeemed me, &c. And

THIRDLY,

THIRDLY, in God the Holy Ghost, who *sanctifieth* me : For these *three* distinctions, are expressive of the three grand degrees of the faith; whereby we inherit ALL the promises of God, and are made partakers of the divine nature : They are not descriptive of faith in three Gods, but of the capital manifestations of the triune God, in whose name we are baptized ; and of the three great dispensations of the everlasting gospel, namely that of the *heathens*, that of the *jews*, and that of *spiritual christians* ; the dispensation of Abraham being only a link between heathenism and judaism ; and the dispensation of John the baptist, or of christianity begun, being only a transition between judaism and christianity perfected.

Our church-catechism brings to my remembrance the office of confirmation, it was, it seems, originally intended to lead young believers to the fulness of the christian dispensation, agreeably to what we read Acts viii. 12, &c. Peter and John went from Jerusalem to Samaria to lay their hands on the believers who had not yet been baptized with the Holy Ghost, and to pray, that they might receive him : For as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they were baptized by Philip in the name of the Lord Jesus. — When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth ? I fear, but little of the faith peculiar to his full dispensation. Most professors seem satisfied with John's baptism or Philip's baptism : The Lord raise us apostolic pastors to pray in the demonstration of the spirit and of power : ' Strengthen thy servants, O Lord, with the ' Holy Ghost, the Comforter ; and daily increase in ' them thy manifold gifts of grace ; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding ; the Spirit of counsel and ' ghostly strength ; the Spirit of knowledge and true ' godliness ; and fill them with the Spirit of thy holy ' fear now and for ever.' *Order of Confirmation*. Can it be said that those, in whom that prayer is not now answered, live under the dispensation of christianity perfected ? Are they either established christians, or spiritual church-men ? How long shall the mystery of iniquity prevail ! How long shall a *pharisaic deistical* world

world *destroy* the faith of the SON, under colour of contending for faith in the FATHER ! And how long shall a world of antinomian solifidian professors destroy faith in the *Holy Ghost*, under pretence of recommending faith in the Son ! O Lord, exert thy power : *Pour of thy spirit upon all flesh*, and give wisdom to all thy ministers to divide the word of truth aright, and to feed thy people according to their states and thy dispensations !

If these answers give my objector no satisfaction, and he still thinks it his duty to attack my Essay, I beg leave to address him in the words of a judicious divine of the last century. ‘ I shall not need (I presume) to desire you, that in your answer you will not rise up in your might against the weaker, looser, or less considerate passages or expressions (of which kind you may very possibly meet with more than enough :) but that you will rather bend the *strength* of your reply, against the *strength* of what you shall oppose. You well know that a field may be won, tho’ many soldiers of the conquering side should fall in the battle : and that a tree may flourish and retain both its beauty, and firmness of standing in the earth, tho’ many of the smaller twigs and lesser branches should prove dry, and so be easily broken off. So may a mountain remain unmoved, yea immovable, tho’ many handfuls of the lighter and looser earth about the sides of it, should be taken up, and scattered into the air like dust. In like manner the body of a discourse may stand entire in its solidity, weight and strength, tho’ many particular expressions, sayings, and reasonings therein, that are more remote from the centre, should be detected either of inconsiderateness, weakness, or untruth.’

END OF THE SECOND APPENDIX.

ERRATUM.] Page 152, line 30, after *hundred*, add *years*.

**A
SECOND CHECK
TO
ANTINOMIANISM.**

7 years up to 1900
2. Shirley, Walter:
Narrative of the principal
events of his life

John William Fletcher

A
SECOND CHECK
TO
ANTINOMIANISM;

OCCASIONED BY
A LATE NARRATIVE,
In THREE LETTERS,
To the Hon. and Rev. Author.

BY
The VINDICATOR of the Reverend
Mr. WESLEY's Minutes.

" Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and *scriptural*
" doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure
" sound doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.

" *Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the*
" *faith; but let brotherly love continue.*"

Tit. i. 13. Heb. xiii. 1.

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M. ENGLEFIELD, West-street, near Seven Dials;
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MDCCLXXI.

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P R E F A C E.

THE publication of the Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Minutes having been represented by some persons as an act of injustice, the following letter is published to throw some light upon that little event, and serve as a preface to the *Second Check to Antinomianism*.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

As I love open dealing, I send you the substance, and almost the very words of a private letter I have just written to Mr. Shirley, in answer to one, in which he informs me he is going to publish his Narrative. He is exceedingly welcome to make use of any part of my letters to Mr. I—d concerning the publication of my Vindication, and you are equally welcome to make what use you please of this. Among friends all things are, or should be common. I am,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

Madeley, 11th Sept.

1771.

J. F.

To the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

It is extremely proper, nay, it is highly necessary, that the public should be informed, how much like a minister of the Prince of Peace, and a meek, humble, loving brother in the gospel of Christ you behaved at the conference. Had I been there, I would gladly have taken upon me to proclaim these tidings of joy to the lovers of Zion's peace. Your conduct at that time of love, is certainly the best excuse for the hasty step you had taken, as my desire of stopping my Vindication upon hearing of it, is the best apology I can make for my severity to you.

I am not averse at all, Sir, to your publishing the passages you mention out of my letters to Mr. I—d. They shew my peculiar love and respect for you, which I shall at all times think an honor, and at this juncture shall feel a peculiar pleasure, to see proclaimed to the world. They apologize for my calling myself a *lover of quietness*, when I unfortunately prove a *son of contention*: And they demonstrate that I am not altogether void of the fear, that becomes an awkward, unexperienced surgeon, when

when he ventures to open a vein in the arm of a person for whom he has the highest regard. How natural is it for him to tremble, lest by missing the intended vein, and pricking an unseen artery, he should have done irreparable mischief, instead of an useful operation.

But while you do me the kindness of publishing those passages, permit me, Sir, to do Mr. W. the justice of informing him, I had also written to Mr. I—d, that, “ whether my letters were suppressed or not, the Minutes *must* be vindicated,—that Mr. W. owed it to the Church, to the *real Protestants*, to all his societies, and to his own aspersed character,—and that after all, the controversy did not seem to me, to be so much whether the Minutes should stand, as whether the antinomian gospel of Dr. Crisp should prevail over the practical gospel of Jesus Christ.”

I must also, Sir, beg leave to let my vindicated friend know, that in the very letter where I so earnestly intreated Mr. I—d to stop the publication of my letters to you, and offered to take the whole expence of the impression upon myself, though I should be obliged to sell my last shirt to defray it, I added that, “ If they were published, I must look upon it as a *necessary evil* or *misfortune*,” which of the two words I used I do not justly recollect :

A mis-

A misfortune for you and me, who must appear inconsistent to the world; you, Sir, with your Sermons; and I with my Title-page; and nevertheless *necessary* to vindicate misrepresented truth, defend an eminent minister of Christ, and stem the torrent of Antinomianism.

It may not be improper also, to observe to you, Sir, that when I presented Mr. W. with my Vindication, I begged he would correct it, and take away whatever might be unkind or too sharp: urging that though I meant no unkindness, I was not a proper judge of what I had written under peculiarly delicate and trying circumstances, as well as in a great hurry; and did not therefore dare to trust either my pen, my head, or my heart. He was no sooner gone, than I sent a letter after him, to repeat and urge the same request, and he wrote me word, he had “expunged every tart expression.” *If he has*, (for I have not yet seen what alterations his friendly pen has made,) I am reconciled to their publication; and *that he has*, I have reason to hope from the letters of two judicious London-friends, who calmed my fears, lest I should have treated you with unkindness.

One of them says, “I reverence Mr. Shirley for his candid acknowledgment of his hastiness in
6
judging.

judging. I commend the Calvinists at the conference for their justice to Mr. W. and their acquiescence in the declaration of the preachers in connection with him. But is that declaration however dispersed a remedy adequate to the evil done not only to Mr. W., but to the cause and work of God? Several Calvinists, in eagerness of malice, had dispersed their calumnies through the three kingdoms. A truly excellent person herself, in her mistaken zeal, had represented him as a *papist unmasked*, an *heretick*, an *apostate*. A clergyman of the first reputation informs me, a *Poem on his apostasy* is just coming out. Letters have been sent to every serious churchman and dissenter through the Land together with the Gospel Magazine. Great are the shoutings, *and now that he lieth, let him rise up no more!* This is all the cry. His dearest friends and children are staggered and scarce know what to think. You, in your corner, cannot conceive the mischief that has been done and is still doing. But your letters, in the hand of Providence, may answer the good ends you proposed by writing them. You have not been too severe to dear Mr. Shirley, moderate Calvinists themselves being judges; but very kind and friendly to set a good mistaken man right, and probably to preserve him from the like rashness as long as he lives. Be not troubled therefore, but cast your care upon the Lord."



My other Friend says, " Considering what harm the circular letter has done, and what an useless satisfaction Mr. Shirley has given by his vague acknowledgement, it is no more than just and equitable, that your letters should be published."

Now, Sir, as I never saw that *Acknowledgment*, nor the *softening corrections* made by Mr. W. in my Vindication; as I was not informed of some of the above-mentioned particulars when I was so eager to prevent the publication of my letters; and as I have reason to think that through the desire of an immediate peace, the festering wound was rather skinned over than probed to the bottom; all I can say about this publication is, what I wrote to our common friend, namely, that " I must look upon it as a NECESSARY evil."

I am glad, Sir, you do not direct your letter to Mr. Oliver who was so busy in publishing my Vindication, for by a letter I have just received from Bristol, I am informed he did not hear how desirous I was to call it in, till he had actually given out before a whole congregation, it would be sold. Besides, he would have pleaded with smartness, that he never approved of a patched up peace, that he bore his testimony against it, at the time it was made, and had a personal right to produce my arguments, since both parties refused to hear *his* at *the conference*.

If your letter is friendly, Sir, and you print it in the same size with my Vindication, I shall gladly buy 10*l.* worth of the copies, and order them to be stitched with my Vindication, and given gratis to the purchasers of it; as well to do you justice, as to convince the world that we make a loving war; and also to demonstrate how much I regard your respectable character, and honor your dear person. Mr. W.'s heart is, I am persuaded, too full of brotherly love to deny me the pleasure of thus shewing you how sincerely I am,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Madeley, 11th Sept.
1771.

J. F.

• *Practical* – The book is written in a clear, concise, and practical style, making it easy to read and understand. It includes many examples and exercises to help readers apply the concepts to their own work.

1. 1990年12月25日，在俄罗斯莫斯科市，俄罗斯联邦总统叶利钦在克里姆林宫正式签署《俄罗斯联邦宪法》，宣布俄罗斯联邦正式成为民主国家。

the 1990s, the number of people in the United States who are 65 years of age or older is projected to increase from 20 million to 30 million, and the number of people 75 years of age or older is projected to increase from 10 million to 15 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996). The number of people 85 years of age or older is projected to increase from 2 million to 4 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996). The number of people 90 years of age or older is projected to increase from 500,000 to 1 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996). The number of people 95 years of age or older is projected to increase from 100,000 to 200,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996). The number of people 100 years of age or older is projected to increase from 10,000 to 20,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996).

FIRST LETTER.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

I Cordially thank you for the greatest part of your Narrative. It confirms me in my hopes, that your projected opposition to Mr. Wesley's minutes, proceeded in general from zeal for the Redeemer's glory; and as such a zeal, though amazingly mistaken, had certainly something very commendable in it, I sincerely desire your Narrative may evidence your *good meaning*; as some think my Vindication does your *mistake*.

In my last private letter I observed, Rev. Sir, that if your Narrative was *kind*, I would buy a number of copies, and give them gratis to the purchasers of my book, that they might see all you can possibly produce in your own defence, and do you all the justice your proper behaviour at the conference deserves. But as it appears to me there are some important mistakes in that performance, I neither dare recommend it *absolutely* to my friends, nor wish it in the religious world the *full* success you desire.

I do not complain of its severity; on the contrary, considering the sharpness of my 5th letter, I gratefully acknowledge it is *kinder* than I had reason to expect. But permit me to tell you, Sir, I look for *justice* to the scriptural arguments I advance in defence of Truth, before I look for *kindness* to my insignificant person, and could much sooner be satisfied with the *former* than with the *latter* alone.

As I do not admire the fashionable method of ad-

vancing general charges without supporting them by particular proofs, I shall take the liberty of pointing out some mistakes in your Narrative, and by that means endeavour to do justice to Mr. Wesley's Declaration, your own Sermons, my Vindication, and above all to the cause of practical religion.

Waving the repetition of what I said in my last touching the publication of my five letters to you, I object first to your putting a wrong colour upon Mr. Wesley's Declaration. You insinuate or assert that he, and 53 of the preachers in conference with him, give up the doctrine of justification by works in the day of judgment. *It appears, say you, from their subscribing the Declaration, notwithstanding Mr. Oliver's remonstrances, that they do not maintain a second justification by works.*

Surely, Sir, you wrong them. They might have objected to some of Mr. Oliver's expressions, or been displeased with his readiness to enter the lists of dispute; but certainly so many judicious and good men could never so betray the cause of practical religion, as tamely to renounce a truth of that importance. If they had, one step more would have carried them full into Dr. Crisp's eternal justification, which is the very center of Antinomianism; and without waiting for the return of the next conference, I would bear my *legal* testimony against their *antinomian* error. Mr. W. I reverence as the greatest minister I know, but would not follow him one step farther than he follows Christ. Were he really guilty of rejecting the evangelical doctrine of a second justification by works, with the plainness and honesty of a Suisse I would address him, as I beg you would permit me to address you.

I. Neither you, Rev. Sir, nor any divine in the world have, I presume, a right to blot out of the sacred Records those words of Jesus Christ, St. James, and St. Paul: *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.*

life.—Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that DOES the will of my Father—Be ye therefore DOERS of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves—for as we are under the law to Christ, not the bearers of the law shall be just before God, but the DOERS of the law shall be JUSTIFIED.—Every man's WORK shall be made manifest: For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's WORK of what sort it is. His very words shall undergo the severest scrutiny: I say unto you, (O how many will insinuate the contrary!) that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, for BY THY WORDS shalt thou then BE JUSTIFIED, and by thy words shalt thou then be condemned.

Can you say, Sir, that the justification mentioned by our Lord in this passage, is the same as that which St. Paul speaks of as the present privilege of all believers, and has no particular reference to *the day of judgment* mentioned in the preceding sentence? Or will you intimate our Lord does not declare we shall be justified in the last day by *works*, but by *words*? Would this evasion be judicious? Do not all professors know that *words* are *works* in a theological sense; as being both the signs of the *workings* of our hearts, and the positive *works* of our tongues? Will you expose your reputation as a divine, by trying to prove that although we shall be justified by the *works* of our *tongues*, those of our *hands* and *feet* shall never appear for or against our justification? Or will you insinuate that our Lord *recanted* the legal sermons written Matt. v. and xii? If you do, his particular account of the day of judgment, Chap. xxv. which strongly confirms and clearly explains the doctrine of our second justification by works, will prove you greatly mistaken; as will also his declaration to St. John above 40 years after, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man as his WORK, not faith, shall be.*

O if faith alone turns the scale of justifying evidence at the bar of God, how many bold antinomians will claim relation to Christ, and boast they are interested in his imputed righteousness! How many will say with the foolish virgins, "*Lord! Lord! we are of faith, and Abraham's children: In thy name we publicly opposed all legal professors, traduced their teachers as enemies to thy free grace; and to do thee service made it our business to expose the righteousness, and cry down the good works of thy people; therefore Lord! Lord! open to us!*" But alas! far from thanking them for their pains, without looking at their boasted faith, he will dismiss them with a *Depart from me ye that work iniquity!* As if he said:

"*Depart, ye that made the doctrine of my atonement a cloke for your sins, or sewed it as a pillow under the arms of my people, to make them sleep in carnal security when they should have worked out their salvation with fear and trembling. You profess to know me, but I disown you. My sheep I know: Them that are mine I know: The seal of my holiness is upon them all: The motto of it—(LET HIM THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST, DEPART FROM INIQUITY) is deeply engraven on their faithful breasts—Not on yours, Ye carnal, Ye sold under Sin.*"

"*And why called ye me Lord! Lord! and did not do the things which I said? Why did you even use my righteousness as a breast-plate, to stand it out against the word of my righteousness; and as an engine to break both tables of my law, and batter down my Holiness? Your heart condemns you, Ye sinners in Zion! Ye salt without savour! Ye believers without charity! And am not I greater than your heart! And know I not your works? Yes, I know that the love of God is not in you, for you despised one of these my brethren. How could you think to deceive me the Searcher of hearts and Tryer of reins? And how did you dare to call yourselves by my name? As if you were my people? my dear people!*"

circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 Cor. vii. 19.

III. This doctrine is so obvious in the scriptures, so generally received in all the churches of Christ, and so deeply engraven on the conscience of sincere professors, that the most eminent ministers of all denominations perpetually allude to it (Yourself, Sir, not accepted, as I could prove from your sermons, if you had not recanted them). How often, for instance, has that great man of God the truly reverend Mr. Whitefield said to his immense congregations! "You are warned, I am clear of your blood, I shall rise as a swift witness against you, or you against me, in the terrible day of the Lord: O remember to clear me then;" or words to that purpose. And is not this just as if he had said, "We shall all be *justified or condemned in the day of judgment* by what we are now *doing*: I by my preaching, and you by your hearing?"

And say not, Sir, that "such expressions were only *flights of oratory*, and prove nothing" If you do, you *touch the apple of God's eye*. Mr. Whitefield was not a *flighty orator*, but spoke the words of soberness and truth, with divine pathos, and floods of tears declarative of his sincerity.

Instead of swelling this letter into a volume (as I easily might), by producing quotations from all the sober puritan divines, who have directly or indirectly asserted a 2d. justification by works, I shall present you only with two passages from Mr. Henry. On Matt. xii. 37. he says, *Consider how strict the judgment will be on account of our words. BY THY WORDS THOU SHALT BE JUSTIFIED OR CONDEMNED, a common rule in men's judgments, and here applied to God's. Note, the constant tenor of our discourse, according as it is gracious, or not gracious, will be an evidence for us, or against us at that day. Those that seemed to be religious, but bridled not their tongue, will then be found to have put a cheat upon themselves with a vain religion.*—It concerns us to think much

of the day of judgment, that that may be a speck upon our tongues. And again,

Upon those words, Rom. 2, 13. NOT THE HEARERS, OF THE LAW ARE JUST BEFORE GOD, BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW SHALL BE JUSTIFIED; the honest commentator says, *The Jewish (Antinomian) Doctors belsiered up their followers with an opinion that all that were Jews, (the elect people of God) how bad soever they lived, should have a glorious place in the world to come. This the Apostle here opposes. It was a very great privilege that they had the law, but not a saving privilege. UNLESS THEY LIVED UP TO THE LAW THEY HAD.—We may apply it to the Gospel: It is not hearing but DOING THAT WILL SAVE US, John xiii 17. Jam. i. 22. Who does not perceive that Mr. Henry saw the truth, and spoke it so far as he thought his calvinist readers could bear it? Surely if that good man dared to say so much, we who have done "leaning too much towards calvinism," should be inexcusable if we did not say all.*

IV. These testimonies will, I hope, make you weigh with an additional degree of candor the following arguments, which I shall produce as a Logician, lest any should be tempted to call me a *bold Metaphysician*, or almost a *Magician*.

The voice that St. John heard in heaven did not say, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for their faith follows them*: No, it is THEIR WORKS. Faith is the hidden root, hope the rising stalk, and love, together with good works, the nourishing corn: And as the King's agents who fill a royal granary, do not take in the roots and stalks, but the pure wheat alone: So Christ takes neither faith nor hope into heaven, the former being gloriously absorbed in sight, and the latter in enjoyment.

If I may compare faith and hope to *the chariot of Israel and the courser thereof*, they both bring believers to the everlasting doors of glory, but do not enter in themselves. Not so Love and good Works,

people? mine *elect*? Are not all my peculiar people partakers of my holiness, and zealous of good works? Have not I chosen to myself the man that is godly? And protested that the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners (though in sheep's clothing) in the congregation of the righteous? And say I not to the wicked, though he should have been one of my people, *Lo ammi* Thou art none of my people now, what hast thou to do with taking my covenant in thy mouth? You denied me in works, and did not wash your hearts from iniquity in my blood; therefore according to my word, I DENY YOU in my turn, before my Father and his holy angels. Perish your hope, Ye hypocrites! And utter darkness be your portion, Ye double minded! Let fearfulness surprise you, ye tinkling cymbals! Let the fall of your Babels crush you, Ye towering professors of my humble faith! Fly, ye clouds without water; Ye chaff, fly before the blast of my righteous indignation! Ye workers of iniquity! Ye Satans transformed into angels of light! Ye cursed! depart!"

II. Nor is our Lord singular in his doctrine of justification or condemnation by works in the day of judgment. If it is an heresy, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles are as great heretics as their Master. Enoch, quoted by St. Jude, prophesied that when the Lord shall come to execute judgment upon all men, he will convince the ungodly among them of all their ungodly DEEDS and hard SPEECHES. This conviction will no doubt be in order to condemnation; and this condemnation will not turn upon unbelief, but its effects, ungodly deeds and hard speeches.——Solomon confirms the joint testimony of Enoch and St. Jude where he says, *He that knoweth the heart shall render to every man according to his WORKS*: and again, *Know, O young man, that for all these things, for all thy ways, God shall bring thee into judgment.*

St. Paul, the great champion for faith, is peculiarly express upon this anti-Crispian doctrine.

The Lord, says he, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, will render to every man according to his DEEDS; to them that CONTINUE IN WELL DOING, here is the true perseverance of the saints! Eternal life;—indignation upon every soul of man that DOES evil, and glory to every man who WORKETH good; for there is no respect of persons with God—We shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things DONE in the body, not according to that he hath believed, whether it be true or false, but according to that he hath DONE, whether it be good or bad.—St. Peter asserts that the Father without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's WORK.—And St. John, who next to our Lord gives us the most particular description of the day of judgment, concludes it by these awful words, And the dead were judged out of things written in the books, according to their WORKS. It is not once said according to their FAITH.

Permit me, Sir, to sum up all these testimonies in the words of two kings and two apostles. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, says the King who chose Wisdom, Fear God and keep his COMMANDMENTS, for this is the whole duty of man; for God shall bring every WORK into judgment, whether it be good or evil.—They that have DONE good, says the King who is Wisdom itself (and the Athanasian creed after him) shall go into everlasting life; and they that have NOT DONE good, or that have DONE evil, to everlasting punishment.—You see then, and they are the words of St. James; that a man is JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, and not by faith only. By faith he is justified at his conversion, and when his backslidings are healed. But he is justified by works (1.) In the hour of trial, as Abraham was when he had offered up Isaac: (2.) In a court of spiritual or civil judicature, as St. Paul at the bar of Festus: And (3.) before the judgment-seat of Christ, as every one will be whose faith, when he goes hence, is found working by love: For there, says St. Paul, as well as in consistorial courts, cir-*
cumcision

for Love is both the nature and element of saints in glory; and good *Works* necessarily *follow them*, both in *the books* of remembrance which *shall then be opened*, and in the objects and witnesses of those works, who shall then be all present; as it appears from the words of our Lord, *You have done it, or you have not done it to one of the least of THESE my brethren*; and those of St. Paul to his dear converts, *You shall be my joy and my crown in that day*. Thus it is evident that although *faith* is the temporary measure according to which God deals out his mercy and grace in this world, as we may gather from that sweet saying of our Lord, *Be it done to thee according to thy FAITH*; yet *love* and *good works* are the eternal measures, according to which he distributes justification and glory in the world to come. On these observations I argue.

We shall be justified in the last day by the grace and evidences which shall *then* remain.

Love and good Works, the fruits of faith, shall *then* remain.

Therefore we shall *then* be justified by Love and good Works: That is, not by faith, but by its fruits.

V. This doctrine so agreeable to scripture, the sentiment of moderate calvinists, and the dictates of reason, *recommends itself likewise to every man's conscience in the sight of God*: Who, but Dr. Crisp, could (after a calm review of the whole affair) affirm that in the day of judgment, if I am accused of being actually an hypocrite, Christ's sincerity will justify me, whether it be found in me or not?

Again, Suppose I am charged with being a drunkard, a thief, an whoremonger, a covetous person; or a fretful, impatient, ill-natured man, or if you please a proud bigot, an implacable zealot, a malicious persecutor, who, notwithstanding fair appearances of godliness, would raise disturbances even in heaven, if I were admitted there: Will Christ's sobriety,

sobriety, honesty, chastity, generosity; or will his gentleness, patience, and meekness, justify me from such dreadful charges? must not I be found really sober, honest, chaste, and charitable? Must I not be inherently gentle, meek, and loving? Can we deny this without flying in the face of common sense, breaking the strongest bars of scriptural truth, and opening the flood-gates to the foulest waves of antinomianism? If we grant it, do we not grant a second justification by works? And does not St. Paul grant, or rather *insist* upon as much, when he declares that *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?*

VI. You will probably ask what advantage the Church will reap from this doctrine of a second justification by works. I answer that, under God, it will rouse Antinomians out of their carnal security, stir up believers to follow hard after holiness, and reconcile fatal differences among Christians, and seeming contradictions in the scripture.

(1.) It will re-awaken Antinomians †, who fancy there

† I beg I may not be understood to level the following paragraphs, or any part of these letters, at my pious Calvinist brethren. God knows how deeply I reverence many, who are immovably fixed in what some call *the doctrines of grace*; how gladly (as conscious of their genuine conversion and eminent usefulness) I would lie in the dust at their feet to honor our Lord in his dear members; and how often I have thought it a peculiar infelicity in any degree dissent from such excellent men, with whom I wanted both to live and die, and with whom I hope soon to reign for ever.

As these *real* children of God lament the bad use antinomians make of their principles, I hope they will not be offended if I bear my testimony against a growing evil, which they have frequently opposed themselves. While the Calvinists guard the *Foundation* against *pharisees*, for which I return them my sincere thanks; they will, I hope, allow the *Remonstrants* to guard the *superstructure* against *antinomians*. If in doing those good offices to the church, we find ourselves obliged to bear a little *hard* upon the peculiar sentiments of our opposite friends, let us *do it in such a manner* as not to break the bonds of peace and brotherly

there is no condemnation to them, whether they walk after the spirit in love, or after the flesh in malice; whether they forsake all to follow Christ, or like Judas and Sapphira keep back part of what should be the Lord's without reserve. Thousands boldly profess justifying faith and perhaps eternal justification, who reverence the commandments of God, just as much as they regard the Scriptures quoted in Mr. W.'s misquotes.

Upon their doctrinal systems they raise a tower of presumption, whence they bid defiance both to the Law and Gospel of Jesus. His Law says, *Love God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself, that thou mayest live in glory.—If thou wilt enter into the life of glory, keep the commandments.* But this raises their pity, instead of commanding their respect and exciting their diligence. "Moses is buried, say they: We have nothing to do with the law! *We are not under the law to Christ!* Jesus is not a Lawgiver to controul, but a Redeemer to save us."

brotherly kindness; so shall our honest reproofs become matter of useful exercise to that love which *thinketh no evil, hopeth all things, rejoiceth even in the galling truth*, and is neither quenched by many waters, nor damped by any opposition.

I have long wished to see, on both sides of the question about which we unhappily divide, moderate men stepping out of the unthinking, noisy croud of their party, to look each other lovingly in the face, and to convince the world that with impartial zeal they will guard *both* the foundation and the superstructure against all adversaries, those of their own party not excepted. Whoever does this *emne tulit punctum*: he is a real friend to *both* parties, and to the whole gospel; for he cordially embraces all the people of God, and joins in one blessed medium the seemingly incompatible extremes of scriptural truth—Ye men of clear heads, honest hearts, and humble loving spirits, nature and grace have formed you on purpose to do the church this important service. Therefore without regarding the bigots of your own party, in the name of the loving Jesus, and by his catholic spirit, give professors public lessons of *moderation and consistency*, and permit me to learn those rare virtues with thousands at your feet.

The Gospel cries to them *Repent and believe*, and just as if God was to be the penitent believing sinner, they carelessly reply, "The Lord must do all, repentance and faith are *his* works, and they will be done in the day of his power;" and so without resistance they decently follow the stream of worldly vanities and fleshly lusts.—St. Paul cries, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*: We know better, answer they, there are neither *if's* nor conditions in all the gospel: He adds, *This one thing I do, leaving the things that are behind, I press towards the mark, for the prize of my high calling in Christ Jesus—the crown of life: Be ye followers of me: RUN also the race that is set before you.* "What! say they, would you have us *run* and *work* for life? Will you always harp upon that legal string *do! do!* instead of telling us that we have *nothing* to do, but to believe that all is done?"—St. James cries, *Show your faith by your works; faith without works is DEAD* already, much more that which is accompanied by bad works. "What! say they, do you think the lamp of faith can be put out as a candle can be extinguished, by not being suffered to shine? We orthodox hold just the contrary: We maintain both that faith can never *die*, and that living faith is consistent not only with the omission of good works, but with the commission of the most horrid crimes."—St. Peter bids them *give all diligence to make their election sure by adding to their faith virtue, &c.* "Legal stuff! say they, the covenant is well ordered in all things and *sure*: Neither will our *virtue* save us, nor our *sins* damn us."—St. John comes next and declares, *He that sinneth is of the Devil.* "What! say they, do you think to make us converts to Arminianism, by thus insinuating that a man can be a child of God to-day and a child of the devil to-morrow?"—St. Jude advances last and charges them to *keep themselves in the love of God*, and they supinely reply, "We can do nothing: Besides, we are as easy and as safe without a *frame* as with one."

With the sevenfold shield of their antinomian faith they would fight the 12 apostles round, and come off, in their own imagination, more than conquerors. Nay, were Christ himself to come to them incognito, as he did to the disciples that went to Emmaus, and say, *Be ye perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect*, it is well if, while they measured him from head to foot with looks of pity or surprize, some would not be bold enough to say with a sneer, "You are a perfectionist it seems, a follower of poor John Wesley! Are you? For our part we are for *Christ and free grace*, but John Wesley and you are for *perfection and free will*."

Now, Sir, if any doctrine, humanly speaking, can rescue these mistaken souls out of so dreadful a snare, it is that I contend for. Antinomian dreams vanish before it, as the noxious damps of the night before the rising sun. St. Paul, if they would but hear him out, with this one saying as with a thousand rams would demolish all their Babels: *Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God*: Or, to speak agreeable to our times, "Before the tribunal of Christ, forms of godliness, calvinian and arminian notions *are nothing*; confessions of faith and recantations of error, past manifestations and former experiences *are nothing*, but *the keeping of the commandments of God*;" the very thing which antinomians ridicule or neglect!

(2.) This doctrine is not less proper to animate feeble believers in their careless pursuit of holiness. O if it were clearly preached and steadily believed— if we were fully persuaded we shall soon *appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, to answer for every thought, word and work, for every business we enter upon, every sum of money we lay out, every meal we eat, every pleasure we take, every affliction we endure, every hour we spend, every idle word we speak, yea and every temper we secretly indulge,—if we knew we shall certainly *give account of all the chapters we read, all the prayers we offer,*

all the sermons we hear or preach, all the sacraments we receive; of all the motions of divine grace, all the beams of heavenly light, all the breathings of the spirit, all the invitations of Christ, all the drawings of the Father, reproofs of our friends, and checks of our own conscience,—and if we were deeply conscious that every neglect of duty will rob us of a degree of glory, and every wilful sin of a jewel in our crown, if not our crown itself; what humble, watchful, holy, heavenly persons would we be! How serious and self-denying! How diligent and faithful! In a word, how angelical, and divine *in all manner of conversation!*

Did the *Woman*, the professing church, cordially embrace this doctrine, she would no more stay *in the wilderness* idly talking of her beloved; but actually *leaning upon him* she would come out of it in the sight of all her enemies. No more wrapped up in the showey cloud of ideal perfection or imaginary righteousness, and casting away her cold garments, her moon-like changes of merely doctrinal apparel, she would shine with the dazzling glory of her Lord; she would burn with the hallowing fires of his love: Once more she would be *clothed with the Sun and have the Moon under her feet.*

Ye lukewarm Talkers of Jesus's ardent love, if you were deeply conscious that nothing but love shall enter heaven, instead of judging of your growth in grace, by the warmth with which you espouse the tenets of Calvin or Arminius, would you not instantly try your state by the xiii. Chap. to the Corinthians, and by our Lord's alarming messages to the falling or fallen churches of Asia? Springing out of your Laodicean indifference, would you not earnestly pray for the faith of the gospel, the *faith that works by burning love*? If the *fire is kindled*, would you not be afraid of putting it out by *quenching the Spirit*? Would not you even dread *grieving him* lest *your love should grow cold*? Far from accounting the *shedding abroad of the love* *god in your hearts* an unnecessary frame, would you

you not be *straitened* till you were *baptized every one of you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*?

Ye who hold the doctrine of perfection without *going on to perfection*, and ye who explode it as a pernicious delusion, and inconsistently publish hymns of solemn prayer for it, how would you agree from the bottom of your re-awakened hearts to sing together in days of peace and social worship, as you have carelessly sung asunder,

O for an heart to praise our God !

An heart from sin set free !—

An heart in ev'ry thought renew'd

And fill'd with love divine !

Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,

A copy, Lord, of thine.—

“ Bigotry from us” remove,

Perfect all our souls in Love, &c.

O ye Halcyon days ! Ye days of brotherly love and genuine holiness ! if you appeared to pacify and gladden our distracted Jerusalem, how soon would practical christianity emerge from under the frothy billows of Antinomianism, and the proud waves of Pharisaism, which continually break against each other, and openly *foam out their own shame* ! *What carefulness* would godly sorrow *work in us all* ! *What clearing of ourselves* by casting away our dearest idols ! *What indignation* against our former lukewarmness ! *What fear* of offending either God or man ! *What vehement desire* after the full image of Christ ! *What zeal* for his glory ! And *what revenge* of our sins ! *In all things* we should *approve ourselves* for the time to come *to be clear* from the antinomian delusion ! Then would we see what has seldom been seen in our age, distinct (not opposed) societies of meek professors of the *common faith*, walking in humble love, and supporting each other with cheerful readiness, like different battalions of the same invincible army. And if ever we perceived any contention among them, it would be only about the

lowest place and the most dangerous post. Instead of *striving for mastery* they would strive only who should stand truest to the standard of the cross, and best answer the neglected motto of the primitive christians: *Non magna loquimur sed vivimus*. "Our religion does not consist in high words but in good works."

(3.) I observed that this doctrine will likewise reconcile seeming contradictions in the scriptures and fatal differences among christians: Take one instance of the former: What can those who reject a second justification by works make of the solemn words of our Lord, *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, or by thy Words thou shalt be condemned*, Mat. xii. 37? And by what art can they possibly reconcile them with St. Paul's assertions, Rom. iv. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is imputed to him for Righteousness*. And, v. 1. *Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Accept an example of the latter. In the antinomian days of Dr. Crisp arose the honest people we call Quakers. Shocked at the general abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, they rashly inferred it could never be from God; and seeing none *shall be justified* in glory but *the doers of the law*, they hastily concluded there is but one justification, namely the being made inherently just, or the being sanctified and then declared holy. Admit our doctrine, and you have both parts of the truth, that which the Antinomians hold against the Quakers, and that which the Quakers maintain against the Antinomians. Each alone is dangerous, both together mutually defend each other, and make up the scriptural doctrine of justification, which is invincibly guarded, on the one hand by *faith* against Pharisees, and on the other by *works* against Antinomians. Reader, may both be thy portion! So shalt thou be eternally reinstated both in the *favour* and *image* of God.

VI. But while I enumerate the benefits which the Church will reap from a *practical* knowledge of our second justification by works, an honest protestant, who has more zeal for, than acquaintance with the truth, advances with his heart full of holy indignation, and his mouth of objections which he says are unanswerable. Let us consider them one by one.

Obj. 1. "Your popish, antichristian doctrine I abhor, and could even burn at a stake as a witness against it. Away with your new-fangled arminian tenets! I am for old christianity, and, with St. Paul, *determined to know nothing for justification but Christ, and him crucified.*"

Ans. Do you indeed! Then I am sure you will not deny both Jesus Christ and St. Paul in this old christian doctrine, for Christ says *By THY WORDS shalt thou be justified*, and St. Paul declares, *not the bearers, but the DOERS of the law (of Christ) shall be justified.* Alas, how often are those who say they will know and have *nothing but Christ*, the first to set him at nought as a Prophet, by railing at his holy doctrine; or to reject him as a King, by trampling upon his royal proclamations! But *I wot that through ignorance they do it, as do also their Rulers.*

Obj. 2. "This legal doctrine robs God's dear children of their comforts and gospel-liberty, binds Moses' intolerable burden upon their free shoulders, and intangles them again in the galling yoke of bondage."

Ans. If God's dear children have got into a *false* liberty of doing the devil's works, either by *not going into the vineyard* when they have said *Lord, I go*, or by *beating their fellow-servants* there instead of working with them; the sooner they are robbed of it the better; for if they continue thus free. they will e'er long be *bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness.* It is the very spirit of antinomianism to represent God's commandments as grievous. and the keeping of his law as *bondage.* Not so the faithful children of God: *their heart is never*

much at liberty, as when they run *best the way of his commandments, and so fulfil the law of Christ*. Keep them from obedience, and you keep them in the snare of the devil, promising liberty to others while they themselves are the servants of corruption.

Again, you confound the heavy yoke of the circumcision and ceremonial bondage, with which the Galatians once intangled themselves, with the *easy yoke of Jesus Christ*. The former was intolerable, the latter is so *light a burden*, that the only way to find rest unto our souls is to take it upon us. St. Paul calls a dear brother his *yoke-fellow*: You know the word *Belial* in the original signifies *without yoke*; they are *Sons of Belial* who shake off the Lord's yoke; and though they should boast of their *election* as much as the Jews did, Christ himself will say concerning them, *Those mine enemies that refuse my yoke, and will not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me*. So inexpressibly dreadful is the end of lawless liberty!

Obj. 3. "Your doctrine is the damnable error of the Galatians, who madly left mount Sion for mount Sina, made *Christ the alpha* and not the *omega*, and after having begun in the spirit would be made perfect by the flesh. This is the other gospel which St. Paul thought so diametrically contrary to his own, that he wished the teachers of it, though they were *angels of God*, might be even *accursed and cut off*."

Ans. You are under a capital mistake; St. Paul could never be so wild as to *curse himself, anathematize St. James*, and wish the *Messiah* to be again cut off: for he himself taught the Romans that the *doers of the law shall be justified*; St. James evidently maintains a *justification by works*; and our Lord expressly says *by thy words thou shalt be justified*.—Again, the apostle, as if he had foreseen how his Epistle to the Galatians would be abused to antinomian purposes, gives us in it the most powerful antidotes against that poison. Take two or three instances. (1.) He exhorts his fallen converts to the

the fulfilling of all the law: Love one another, says he, for all the Law is fulfilled in this one word, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, because none can love his neighbour as himself, but he that loves God with all his heart. How different is this doctrine from the bold antinomian cry "We have nothing to do with the law!" (2.) He enumerates the works of the flesh, adultery, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, &c. of which, says he, I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not be justified in the day of judgment, or which is the same thing, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. How different a gospel is this, from that which insinuates "impenitent adulterers may be dear children of God, even while such, in a very safe state, and quite sure of glory!" And (3.) as if this awful warning was not enough, he point-blank cautions his readers against the Crispian error. *Be not deceived*, says he, *whatever a man (not whatever Christ) soweth, that shall he also reap: He that soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption, and he that soweth to the spirit shall reap life everlasting.* How amazingly strong therefore must your prejudice be, which makes you produce this Epistle to thrust love and good works out of the important place allotted them in all the word of God! And no where more than in this very epistle!

Obj. 4. "Notwithstanding all you say I am persuaded you are in the dreadful heresy of the Galatians, for they were, like you, for justification by the works of the law; and St. Paul resolutely maintained against them the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith."

Ans. If you once read over the Epistle to the Galatians without prejudice, and without comment, you will see that (1.) they had returned to the beggarly elements of this world, by superstitiously observing days, months, times and years. (2.) Imagining they could not be saved except they were circumcised they submitted even to that grievous and blor
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injunction. (3.) Exact in their useless ceremonies, and fondly hoping to be justified by their partial observance of Moses' Law, they well-nigh forgot the merits of Christ, and openly trampled upon *his law*, and *walked after the flesh*. Stirred up to contentious zeal by their new teachers, they despised the old Apostle's ministry, *bated his person*, and *devoured one another*. In short, they trusted partly in the merit of their superstitious performances, and partly in Christ's merits; and on this preposterous foundation they *built the hay* of Jewish ceremonies *and the stubble* of fleshly lusts. With great propriety therefore the Apostle called them back with sharpness to the only sure foundation, the merits of Jesus Christ; and wanted them to *build upon it gold and precious stones*, all the works of piety and mercy, that spring from *faith working by love*.

Now which of these errors do we hold? Do we not preach present justification *by faith*, and justification at the bar of God *according to what a man soweth*, the very doctrine of this epistle? And do we not "secure the foundation" by insisting that both these justifications are equally by the alone *merits* of Christ, though the second, as our Church intimates in her 12th article, is by the *evidence* of works.

Will you bear with me if I tell you my thoughts? We are all in general condemned by the Epistle to the Galatians, for we have too much dependence on our forms of piety, speculative knowledge, or past experience; and too little heart-felt confidence in the *merits* of Christ: We *sow* too little *to the spirit*, and too much *to the flesh*. But those, in the next place, are peculiarly reprov'd by it, who *return to the beggarly elements*, the idle ways and vain fashions of *this world*.—Those who make as much *ado about the beggarly element* of water, about *baptizing* infants and dipping adults, as the *Troublers* of the church of Galatia did about *circumcising* their converts *that they might glory in their flesh*

flesh.—Those who *zealously affect* others but not well—Those who now despise their spiritual Fathers, *whom they once received as angels of God*—Those who *turn our enemies when we tell them the truth*, who heap to themselves teachers smother than the evangelically legal apostle, and would call us *blind* if we said as he does, *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another*, Gal. vi. 4.—Those who plead for spiritual bondage while they talk of gospel liberty, and affirm that *the son of the bond woman shall always live with the son of the free*, that sin can never be *cast out* of the heart of believers, and that Christ and corruption shall always dwell together in this world.—And lastly, those who say there is no *falling away from grace* when they are already *fallen* like the Galatians, and boast of their stability chiefly because they are ignorant of their fall.

Obj. 5. “However your pharisaic doctrine flatly contradicts the gospel summed up by our Lord in these words, *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*. Here is not one word about works, all turns upon faith.”

Ans. Instead of throwing such hints you might as well speak out at once, and say that Christ in Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*, flatly contradicts what he had said Matt. xii. 37. *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, or by thy Words thou shalt be condemned*. But drop your prejudices, and you will see that the contradiction is only in your own ideas. We steadily assert as our Lord, that *he who believeth, or endureth unto the end believing* (for the word implies both the reality and continuance of the action) shall infallibly be saved; because faith which continues living, works to the last by love and good works, which will infallibly justify us in the day of judgment. For when faith is no more, love and good works will evidence (1.) that we were grafted in Christ by
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true faith, (2.) that we did not *make shipwreck of the faith*,—that we were not *taken away as branches in Him which bear not fruit*, but *abode fruitful branches in the true vine*, and (3.) that we are still in him by HOLY LOVE, the precious and eternal fruit of true persevering faith. How bad is that cause which must support itself by charging an imaginary contradiction upon *the Wisdom of God*, Jesus Christ himself *!

Obj.

* This is frequently the stratagem of those who have no arguments to produce. I bore my testimony against it in the Vindication, and flattered myself that serious writers would be less forward to oppose the truth, and expose the ministers of Christ by that injudicious way of discussing controverted points. Notwithstanding this, I have before me a little pamphlet, in which the Editor endeavours to *answer Mr. W.'s Minutes*, by extracting from his writings passages supposed to stand in direct opposition to the Minutes. Hente in a burlesque upon the *Declaration* he tries to represent Mr. W. as a knave.

I would just observe upon that performance, (1.) that by this method of raising dust, and avoiding to reason the case fairly, every malicious infidel may blind injudicious readers, and make triumphing scoffers cry out, Jesus against Christ! Saul against St. Paul! or John the Divine against John the Evangelist! as well as Wesley against John! and John against Wesley. (2.) Mr. W. having acknowledged in the beginning of the Minutes, he "had leaned too much towards Calvinism," we may naturally expect to meet in his voluminous writings, with a few expressions that look a little towards Antinomianism; and with some paragraphs, which (when detached from the context, and not considered as spoken to deep mourners in Zion, or to souls of undoubted sincerity) seem directly to favour the delusion of the present times. (3.) This may easily be accounted for, without flying to the charges of knavery or contradiction. When after working long without cheering light, we discover the ravishing day of luminous faith, we are all apt in the sincerity of our heart to speak almost as unguardedly of works, as Luther did; but when the fire of antinomian temptations has frequently burned us, and consumed thousands around us, we justly dread it at last; and ceasing to lean towards Crisp's divinity, we return to St. James, St. John, and St. Jude, and to the latter part of St. Paul's epistles, which we too often overlooked, and to which hardly two Ministers did, upon the whole, ever do more justice than Mr. Baxter and Mr. W. (4.) A man who gives to different people, or to the same people at different times,

Obj. 6. "Your doctrine exalts man, and, by giving him room to boast, robs Christ of the glory of his grace. *The top stone* is no more *brought forth with shouting Grace! Grace!* but *Works! Works!*" *unto it*; and the burden of the song in heaven will be "*Salvation to our works!*" and no more "*Salvation to the Lamb!*"

Ans. I no less approve your godly jealousy, than I wonder at your groundless fears. To calm them, permit me once more to observe, (1.) That this doctrine is Christ's, who would not be so unwise as to side with our self-righteous pride, and teach us to rob him of his own glory. It is absurd to suppose Christ would be thus against Christ, for even *Satan* is too wise to be against *Satan*. (2.) Upon our plan as well as upon Crisp's scheme, *free grace* has absolutely *all* the glory. The love and good works by which we shall be justified in the day of judgment are the fruits of faith, and *faith is the gift of God*. Christ the great object of faith, the Holy Ghost called the Spirit of faith, the power of believing, the means, opportunities and will to use that power, are *all* the rich presents of God's *free grace*. All our sins, together with the imperfections of our

times, directly contrary directions, does not always contradict himself. I have a fever, and my Physician, under God, restores me to health by cooling medicines; by and by I am afflicted with the cold rheumatism, and he prescribes fomentations and warming remedies, but my injudicious Apothecary opposes him, under pretence that he goes by *no certain rule*, and *grossly contradicts himself*. Let us apply this to Mr. W. and the Versifier, remembering there is less difference between a burning fever and a cold rheumatism, than between the case of the trifling antinomian and that of the dejected penitent. (5) Whoever considers without prejudice what our satyric Poet produces as *contradictions*, will find some of them do not so much as amount to an *opposition*, and that most of them do not *seem* so contradictory, as numbers of propositions that might be extracted from the oracles of God.—If the Editor of the *Answer to the Minutes* will compare this note with the 31st page of the *Vindication*, I hope he will find his performance answered, his indirect attack upon the Minutes frustrated, and Mr. W.'s honesty fully vindicated.

works, are mercifully forgiven through the blood and righteousness of Christ: Our persons and services are graciously accepted merely for his sake and through his alone merits: And if rewards are granted us according to the fruits of righteousness we bear, it is not because *we* are profitable to God, but because the meritorious sap of the root of David produces those fruits, and the meritorious beams of the sun of righteousness ripen them. Thus you see that which way soever you look at our justification, God has *all* the glory of it, but that of turning moral agents into mere machines, a glory which we apprehend God does no more claim, than you do that of turning your coach-horses into hobby-horses, and your servants into puppets.

If *faith* on earth gives Christ the glory of all our salvation, you need not fear that *Love* (a superior grace) will rob him in heaven; for *love is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, and does not behave herself unseemly* towards a beggar on earth; much less will she do so towards the Lord of glory, when she has attained the zenith of heavenly perfection. Away then with all the imaginary lions you place in your way to truth! Notwithstanding Crisp's prohibitions, like the Bereans, receive Christ in his *holy* doctrine, and be persuaded that in the last day you will shout as loud as the honest Doctor, *Grace! Grace! and Salvation to the Lamb:* without suggesting with him to those on the left hand the blasphemous shouts of *Partiality! Hypocrisy! Barbarity!* and *Damnation to the Lamb!* Thus shall you have all the *free grace* he justly boasts of, without any of his horrid reprobating work.

Obj. 7. "How will the converted thief that did no good works be justified by works?"

Ans. We mean by *WORKS* the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour; and how do you know the *outward behaviour* of the converted thief? Did not his reproofs, exhortations, prayers, pa-

tience, and resignation evidence the liveliness of of his faith, as there was time and opportunity?

(2.) Can you suppose his *inward temper* was not *love* to God and man? Could he *go into paradise* without being born again? Or could he be born again and not love? Is it not said *he that loveth is born of God*; consequently *he that is born of God loveth*? Again, does not he who *loveth fulfil all the law*, and do, as says St. Augustine, all good works in one? And is not *the fulfilling of all the law of Christ* work enough to justify the converted thief by that law?

Obj. 8. "You say that your doctrine will make us *zealous of good works*, but I fully discharge it from that office; for *the love of Christ constraineth us* to abound in every good word and work."

Ans. (1.) St. Paul, who spoke those words with more feeling than you, thought the contrary; as well as his blessed Master, or they would never have taught this doctrine. You do not, I fear, evidence the temper of a *Babe* when you are so exceedingly *wise above what Christ preached*, and *prudent above what the Apostle wrote*. (2.) If the love of Christ in professors is so *constraining* as you say, why do good works and good tempers bear so little proportion to the great talk we hear of its irresistible efficacy? And why can those who have tasted it *return to sin as dogs to their vomit*? Why can they even curse, swear and get drunk? be guilty of idolatry, murder, and incest? (3.) If love alone is always sufficient, why did our Lord work upon his disciples hearts by the hope of *thrones and a kingdom*, and by the fear of a *worm that dieth not*, and a *fire that is not quenched*? Why does the Apostle stir up believers to *serve the Lord with godly fear*, by the consideration that *He is a consuming fire*? Illustrating his assertion by this awful warning, *If they (Corah and his company) escaped not, but were consumed by fire from Heaven, because they refused him (Moses) that spake on earth; much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh*

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from heaven? Why did St. Paul himself, who no doubt understood the gospel as well as Crisp and Saltmarsh, *run a race for an incorruptible crown, and keep his body under, LEST he himself should be a cast-away?* O ye orthodox divines, and thou ludicrous versifier of an awful Declaration, instead of attempting to set Paul against Paul, and to oppose Wesley to Wesley, answer those scriptural questions; and if you cannot do it without betraying *heterodoxy*, for the Lord's sake, for the sake of thousands in Israel, keep no more from the feeble of the flock those necessary helps, which the *very chief of the apostles*, evangelical Paul, without any of your Crispian refinements, continually recommended to others, and daily used himself. And for your own soul's sake, never more prostitute these awful words, *the Love of Christ constraineth us*; never more apply them to yourselves, while you refuse to treat the most venerable ambassador of Christ, I shall not say with *respectful love*, but with *common decency*.

Obj. 9. "All the formal and pharisaical ministers, who are sworn enemies to Christ and the gospel of his grace, preach your legal doctrine of *justification by works in the day of judgment.*"

Ans. And what do you infer from it? That the doctrine is false? If the inference is just, it will follow there is neither heaven nor hell; for they publicly maintain the existence of both. But suppose they now and then preach our doctrine without zeal, without living according to it, or without previously preaching the fall and a *present justification by faith in Christ* productive of peace and power. what can be expected from it? Would not the doctrine of the atonement itself be totally useless, if it were preached under such disadvantages?—The truth is, such ministers are only for the roof, and you it seems, only for the foundation; but a *roof* unsupported by solid walls crushes to death, and a foundation without a roof is not much better than the open air. Therefore *wise masons-builders*, like St. Paul, are for having both
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in their proper places. Like him, when the foundation is well laid, *leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ*, they go on to perfection; nor will they forget as they work out their salvation, to *shout grace, grace*, to the last slate that covers in the building; or to the *top-stone*, the key that binds the solid arch.

Obj. 10. "Should I receive and avow such a doctrine, the generality of professors would rise against me; and while the warmest would call me a *papist*, an *antichrist*, and what not; my dearest christian friends would pity me as an unawakened pharisee, and fear me as a blind legalist."

Ans. Rejoice and be exceeding glad when all men (the godly not excepted) shall say all manner of evil of you falsely for Christ's sake,—for preferring Christ's holy doctrine to the loose tenets of Dr. Crisp: and remember that in our antinomian days, it is as great an honor to be called *legal* by fashionable professors, as to be branded with the name of *Methodist* by the sots who glory in their shame.

VII. As I would hope my Objector is either satisfied or silenced, before I conclude permit me a moment, Rev. Sir, to consider the two important objections which you directly or indirectly make in your Narrative.

(1.) "I should tremble, say you, page 21, lest some bold metaphysician should affirm that a second justification by works is quite consistent with what is contained in Mr. W.'s Declaration; but that it is expressed in such STRONG AND ABSOLUTE TERMS, as must FOR EVER put the most exquisite refinements of metaphysical distinctions AT DEFIANCE."

Ans. For ever at DEFIANCE!—You surprise me, Sir: I, who am as perfect a stranger to exquisite refinements as to Crisp's eternal justification, defy you (pardon a bold expression to a bold metaphysician) ever to produce out of Mr. W.'s Declaration, **E** shall not say (as you do) STRONG AND ABSOLUTE TERMS, but one single word or tittle denying or excluding

excluding a second justification by works; and I appeal both to your second thoughts and to the unprejudiced world, whether these three propositions of the Declaration, *We have no trust or confidence but in the alone MERITS of Christ FOR justification in the day of judgment.*—*Works have no part in MERITING or PURCHASING our justification from first to last, EITHER IN WHOLE OR IN PART.*—*He is not a real Christian Believer (and consequently cannot be saved) WHO DOES NOT GOOD WORKS where there is time and opportunity.*—I appeal, I say, to the unprejudiced world, whether these three propositions are not highly consistent with this assertion of our Lord; *By thy words thou shalt be justified.* that is, “Although from first to last the alone *Merits* of my life and death *purchase* or *deserve* thy justification; yet in the day of judgment thou shalt be justified *by thy works*; that is, thy justification which is purchased by my alone *merits*, will entirely turn upon the *evidence* of thy works, according to the time and opportunity thou hast to do them.”

Who does not see that *to be justified by the EVIDENCE of works*, and *to be justified by the MERITS of works*, are no more phrases of the same import, than *Minutes* and *Heresy* are words of the same signification? The latter proposition contains the error strongly guarded against both in the Declaration and in the Minutes: The former contains an evangelical doctrine, as agreeable to the Declaration and Minutes as to the scriptures; a doctrine of which we were too sparing when we “leaned too much towards calvinism,” but to which, after the example of Mr. W., we are now determined to do justice.

Whoever is ashamed of Christ's words, we will proclaim them to the world. Both from our pulpits and the press we will say, *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*—Yea, *Whoever shall say to his brother, Thou Fool! shall be in danger of hell fire, and whoever maketh a lie shall have his part in the lake*

which burneth with fire and brimstone; for as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, or disbelieveth to unrighteousness, so with the mouth confession is made to SALVATION, or hard speeches are uttered to DAMNATION. Reserve therefore, reverend Sir, your public praises for a more proper occasion than that which caused their breaking out in your Narrative. BLESSED BE GOD, say you, page 16, Mr. Wesley and 53 of his preachers do not agree with Mr. Oliver in the material article of a second justification by works. Indeed, Sir, you are greatly mistaken, for we do agree with him, and shall continue so to do, till you have proved he does not agree with Jesus Christ, or that our doctrine is not perfectly consistent both with the Scriptures and the Declaration.

(2.) Your second objection is not so formal as the first; it must be made up of broad *hints* scattered through your Narrative, and they amount to this, "Your pretended difference between justification by the MERIT of works, and justification by the EVIDENCE of works, and between a 1st and a 2d justification, is founded upon the *subtilities of metaphysical distinctions*: If what you say wears the aspect of truth, it is because you give a new turn to error, by the almost magical power of metaphysical distinctions." Pag. 16, 20, and 21.

Give me leave, Sir, to answer this objection by two appeals, one to the most ignorant collier in my parish, and the other to your own sensible child; and if they can at once understand my meaning, you will see that my *metaphysical distinctions*, as you are pleased to call them, are nothing but the *dictates of common sense*. I begin with the collier.

Thomas, I stand here before the Judge accused of having robbed the Rev. Mr. Shirley near Bath, last month on such an evening; can you speak a word for me? Thomas turns to the Judge and says, "Please your Honor the accusation is false, for our parson was in Madely-wood, and I can make oath of it, for he even reproved me for swearing at

our pit's mouth that very evening." By his evidence the Judge acquits me. Now, Sir, a'k cursing Tom whether I am acquitted and *justified* by his *merits* or by the simple *evidence* he has given, and he will tell you, " Aye to be sure by the *evidence* : Though I am no scholar, I know very well if our methodist parson is not hanged, it is none of my deservings." Thus, Sir, an ignorant collier, as great a stranger to *your metaphysics* as you are to *his mandrel*, discovers at once a material difference between *justification by the EVIDENCE*, and *justification by the MERITS of a witness*.

My 2d Appeal is to your sensible child. By a plain comparison I hope to make him at once understand both the difference there is between our 1st and 2d justification, and the propriety of that difference. The lovely boy is old enough, I suppose, to follow the gardener and me to yonder nursery. Having shewn him the operation of *grafting*, and pointing at the crab-tree newly grafted, " My dear child, would I say, though hitherto this tree has produced nothing but crabs, yet by the skill of the gardener, who has just fixed in it that good little branch, it is now made an *apple-tree*, I *justify* and warrant it such. (Here is an emblem of our *first justification by faith*!) In three or four years, if we live, we will come again and see it: *If it thrives and bears fruit, well*; we shall then by that mark justify it a second time, we shall declare that it is a *good apple-tree* indeed, and fit to be transplanted from this wild nursery into a delightful orchard. But if we find that the old crab-stock, instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and sour crabs; or if it is a *tree whose fruit withereth without fruit, twice dead* (dead in the graft and in the stock) *plucked up by the root*, or quite cankered, far from declaring it a *good tree*, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it, and say, *Cut it down: Why cumbereth it the ground? For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire*"

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Here is an emblem of our *second* justification by ~~works~~, or of the condemnation that will infallibly overtake those Laodicean professors and wretched apostates, whose faith is not shewn by works, where there is time and opportunity.

Instead of offering an insult to your superior understanding, in attempting to explain by *metaphysical distinctions* what I suppose your sensible child has already understood by the help of a grafting-knife, I shall leave you to consider whether scripture, reason, and candor, do not join their influence to make you acknowledge, at least in the court of your own conscience, that you have put as wrong a construction upon Mr. W.'s Declaration as upon his Minutes, and by that means inadvertently given another *rash* touch to the ark of practical religion, and to the character of one of the greatest ministers in the world.

I am with due respect,

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

Your obedient servant, in the bond of the
practical gospel of Christ,

THE VINDICATOR.

SECOND

S E C O N D L E T T E R.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

HAVING endeavoured in my last to do justice to the practical gospel of Christ, and Mr. W.'s awful Declaration; I pass on to the other mistakes of your Narrative. That which strikes me next is the PUBLIC RECANTATION OF YOUR useful SERMONS IN THE FACE OF THE WHOLE WORLD. Page 22.

I. Oh! Sir, what have you done? Do you not know that your Sermons contain not only the legally evangelical doctrine of the Minutes, but likewise all the doctrines which moderate Calvinists esteem as the marrow of the gospel? And shall all be treated alike?—*Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee to do after this manner!* Thus did a good man formerly plead the cause of a *wicked* city, and thus I plead that of your *good* sermons, those twelve valuable, though unripe fruits of your ministerial labours. Upon this plea the infamous city would have been spared, had only *ten* good men been found in it. Now, Sir, spare a valuable book for the sake of a *thousand* excellent things it contains. But if you are inflexible, and still wish it “burned,” imitate at least the kind angels who sent Lot out of the fiery overthrow, and except all the evangelical pages of the unfortunate volume.

Were it not ridiculous to compare wars which cost us only a little ink, and our friends a few pence,

pence, to those which cost armies their blood, and kingdoms their treasures, I would be tempted to say you imitate the Dutch in their last effort to balance the victory, and secure the field. When they are pressed by the French, rather than yield, they break their dykes, let in the sea upon themselves, and lay all their fine gardens and rich pastures under water : but before they have recourse to that strange expedient, they prudently save all the valuable goods they can. Why should you not follow them in their prudential care, as you seem to do in their bold stratagem ? When you publicly lay your useful book under the bitter waters of an anathema, why do you save absolutely nothing ? Why must gospel truths, more precious than the wealth of Holland and the gold of Ophir, lie for ever under the severe scourge of your recantation ? Suppose you had *recanted* your 3d Sermon, *The way to eternal life* in opposition to Mysticism ; and *burned* the 4th, *Salvation by Christ for Jews and Gentiles*, in honor of Calvinism, could you not have spared the rest ?

If you say, you may do what you please with your own ; I answer, Your book publicly exposed to sale, and bought perhaps by thousands, is, in one sense, no more your own ; it belongs to the purchasers, before whom you lay, I fear, a dangerous example ; for when they shall hear that the Author has *publicly recanted it in the face of the whole world*, it will be a temptation to them to slight the gospel it contains, and perhaps to ridicule it *in the face of the whole world*.

You add, " it savours too strongly of mysticism." Some passages are a little tainted with Mr. Law's capital error, and you might have pointed them out ; but if you think *mysticism* is intrinsically bad, you are under a mistake. One of the greatest *mystics*, next to Solomon, is Thomas à Kempis, and, a few errors excepted, I would no more burn his *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, than the Song of Solomon, and Mr.

Mr. Romaine's edifying paraphrase of the 107th Psalm.

You urge also, " Your sermons savour too much of *free will*." Alas! Sir, can you recant *free will*? Was not your will as *free* when you recanted your sermons as when you composed them? Is there not as much *free will* expressed in this one line of the gospel as in all your sermons, *I would have gathered you, and ye would not?* Do not *free will offerings with an holy worship* delight the Lord more than *forced*, and if I may be allowed the expression, *bound-will* services? Is not the *free will* with which the martyrs went to the stake as worthy of our highest admiration, as the *mysticism* of the Canticles is of our deepest attention? If all that strongly " savours of free will" must be " burned," Ye heavens! what Smithfield work will there be in your lucid plains! Wo to Saints! Wo to Angels! for they are all *free-willing* Beings,—all full of *free will*: Nor can you deny it, unless you suppose they are *bound* by irresistible decrees, as the Heathens fancied their Deities were *bampered* with the adamantine chains of an imaginary something they called *Fate*; witness their *Fata vetant*, and *Fata jubent*, and *ineluctabile Fatum*.

Pardon, Rev. Sir, the oddity of these exclamations. I am so grieved at the great advantage we give infidels against the gospel, by making it ridiculous, that I could try even the method of Horace, to bring my friends back from the fashionable refinements of Crisp, to the plain truth as it is in Jesus.

Ridiculum acri

Fortius ac melius stultas plerumque secat res.

Nor is this the only bad tendency of your new doctrine: for by exploding the *freedom* of the will, you rob us of *free* agency; you afford the wicked, who determine to continue in sin, the best excuse *in the world* to do it without either shame or remorse;

more; you make us mere machines, and indirectly reflect upon the wisdom of our Lord! for saying to a set of Jewish machines, *I would and ye would not*. But what is still more deplorable, you inadvertently represent it an unwise thing in God to judge the world in righteousness; and your *new* glass shews his vindictive justice in the same unfavourable light, in which England saw two years ago the behaviour of a great monarch, who was exposed in the public papers for unmercifully cutting with a whip, and tearing with spurs, the horses worked in the tapestry of his royal apartment. because they did not prance and gallop at his nod.

If a commendable, but immoderate fear of Pelagius's doctrine drove you into that of St. Augustine, the oracle of all the Dominicans, Thomists, Jansenists, and all other Roman catholic predestinarians. you need not go so far beyond him as to recant all your sermons, because you mention perhaps three or four times, the freedom of our will in the whole volume. "Let no one, says judicious Melancthon, be offended at the word *free will*, (*liberum arbitrium*) for St. Augustine himself uses it in many volumes, and that almost in every page, even to the surfeit of the reader."

The most ingenious Calvinist that ever wrote against *free will*, is, I think, Mr. Edwards of New England. And his fine system turns upon a comparison by which it may be overturned, and the *freedom* of the will demonstrated.

The will, says he, (if I remember right) is like an even balance which can never turn without a weight, and must *necessarily* turn with one.—But whence comes the weight that *necessarily* turns it? From the understanding, answers he; the last dictate of the understanding *necessarily* turns the will.—And is the understanding also *necessarily* determined? Yes, by the effect which the objects around us *necessarily* have upon us, and by the circumstances in which we *necessarily* find ourselves; so that from first to last our tempers, words and actions *necessarily* follow each

each other, and the circumstances that give them birth, as the 2d, 3d, and 4th links of a chain follow the first, when it is drawn along. Hence the eternal, infallible, irresistible, universal concatenation of events, both in the moral and material world. This is, if I mistake not, the scheme of that great divine, and he spends no less than 412 large pages in trying to establish it.

I would just observe upon it, that it makes the first Cause, or first Mover, the only *free Agent* in the world; all others being *necessarily* bound with the chain of his decrees, drawn along by the irresistible motion of his arm, or, which is the same, intangled in *forcible* circumstances unalterably fixed by his immutable counsel.

And yet, even upon this scheme you needed not, Sir, be so afraid of *free will*; for if the *will* is like an even balance, it is *free* in itself, though it is only with what I beg leave to call a *mechanical freedom*; for an even balance, you know, is *free* to turn either way.

But with respect to our ingenious author's assertion, that the will cannot turn without a weight, because an even balance cannot; I must consider it as a mere begging the question, if not as an absurdity. What is a balance, but *lifeless matter*? And what is the will, but the living *active soul*, *springing up in its willing capacity, and self-exerting, self-determining power*? O how tottering is the mighty fabric raised, I shall not say upon such a fine-spun metaphysical speculation, but upon so weak a foundation as a comparison, which supposes that two things so widely different as *spirit* and *matter*, a *living soul* and a *lifeless balance*, are *exactly* alike with the reference to self-determination! Just as if a *spirit* made after the image of the *living, free and powerful God*, was no more capable of determining itself, than an horizontal beam supporting two equal copper bowls by six silken strings.

I am sorry, Sir, to dissent from such a respectable Divine as yourself, but as I have no taste for new refinements,

refinements, and cannot even conceive how our actions can be *morally* good or evil, any farther than our *free will* is concerned in them; I must follow the universal experience of mankind; and side with the author of the sermons against the author of the Narrative, concerning the *freedom of the will*.

Nor is this *freedom* derogatory to *free grace*; for as it was *free grace* that gave an upright *free will* to Adam at his creation; so whenever his fallen children think or act aright, it is because their *free will* is mercifully prevented, touched, and so far rectified by *free grace*.

However, it must be granted that fashionable professors, and the large book of Mr. Edwards are in general for you; but when you maintained *the freedom of the will*, Jesus Christ and the Gospel were on your side. To the end of the world this plain, peremptory assertion of our Lord, *I would and ye would not*, will alone throw down the sophisms, and silence the objections of the most subtle philosophers against *free will*. When I consider what it implies, far from supposing the will is like a lifeless pair of scales, necessarily turned by the least weight; I see it is such a strong, self-determining power, that it can resist the effect of the most amazing weights; keep itself inflexible under all the warnings, threatnings, miracles, promises, entreaties and tears of the Son of God; and remain obstinately unmoved under all the strivings of his holy Spirit. Yes, put in one scale the most stupendous weights, for instance, the hopes of heavenly joys, and the dread of hellish torments; and only the gaudy feather of honor; or the breaking bubble of worldly joy in the other; if the Will casts itself into the light scale, the feather or bubble will instantly preponderate. Nor is the power of the rectified Will less wonderful; for though you should put all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in one scale, and nothing but the reproach of Christ in the other; yet if the

Will

Will *freely* leaps into the infamous scale, a crown of thorns easily outweighs a thousand golden crowns, and a devouring flame makes ten thousand thrones kick the beam.

Thus it appears the will can be persuaded, never forced. You may bend it by moral suasions, but if you do it farther than it freely gives way, you *break*, you absolutely *destroy* it. A Will forced is no more a *Will*, it is mere *compulsion*; freedom is not less essential to it, than moral agency to man. Nor do I go, in these observations upon the freedom of the will, one step farther than honest John Bunyan, whom all the Calvinists so deservedly admire. In his *Holy War* he tells us there is but one Lord *Will-be-will* in the town of Man's soul: whether he serves *Diabolus* or *Shaddai*, he is *Lord Will-be-will still*; "*a man of great strength, resolution, and courage, whom in his occasion no one can turn,*" if he does not freely turn or yield to be turned.

I hope, Sir, these hints upon the harmlessness of *mysticism*, and the important doctrine of our *free-agency* will convince you, and the purchasers of your sermons, that you have been too precipitate in *publicly recanting them in the face of the whole world*, especially the *ninth*.

If you ask why I particularly interest myself in the behalf of that one discourse, I will let you into the mystery. At the first reading I liked and adopted it; I cut it out of the volume in which it was bound, put it in my sermon-case, and preached it in my church. The title of it is, you know, *Justification by Faith*, and among several striking things on the subject, you quote twice this excellent passage out of our homilies. "*Justification by faith implies a sure trust and confidence a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to the favour of God.*" O Sir, why did you not except it in your *recantation*, both for the honour of our Church and your own?

Were

Were I to print and disperse such an advertisement as this, "Eight years ago I preached in my Church a sermon intitled JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, composed by the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley, to convince Papists and Pharisees that we are accepted through the alone merits of Christ; but I see better now, *I wish this sermon had been burned, and I publicly recant it in the face of the whole world;*" how would the popish priest of Madeley rejoice! And how will that of Loughrea triumph, when he hears *you* have actually done it in your Narrative! What will your protestant parishioners, to whom your book is dedicated, say, when the surprising news reaches Ireland? And what will the world think, when they see you warmly plead in August for *Justification by Faith*, as being, "the foundation that must by all means be secured;" and publicly recant in September your own excellent *sermon of Justification by Faith*?

Indeed, Sir, though I admire your candor in acknowledging there are some exceptionable passages in your discourses, and your humility in readily giving them up, I can no more approve your readiness in making, than in insisting upon *formal recantations*. We cannot be too careful in dealing in that kind of ware; and it is extremely dangerous to do it by wholesale; as by that means we may give up, or *seem* to give up, *before the whole world*, precious truths delivered by Christ himself, and brought down to us in streams of the blood of martyrs.

Among some blunt expostulations that Mr. Wesley erased in my fifth letter, as being too severe, he kindly but unhappily struck out this, "Before you could with candor insist upon a recantation of Mr. W.'s Minutes, should you not have recanted yourself the passages of your own sermons where the same doctrines are maintained; and have sent your recantation through the land together with your circular letter?" Had this been published, it might have convinced you of the un-

seasonableness of your recantation: Thus this *second hasty Rep* would have been prevented; and if I dwell so long upon it now, believe me, Sir, it is chiefly to prevent a *third*.

And now your sermons are recanted, is the vindication of Mr. W.'s Minutes invalidated?—Not at all; for you have not yet recanted the Bath Hymn-book, nor can you ever get Mr. Henry, Mr. Williams, and a tribe of other anti-Crispian, though Calvinist divines now in glory, to recant with you; much less the Prophets, Apostles, and Christ himself, on whose irrefragable testimony we chiefly rest our doctrine.

II. As I have pleaded out the cause of *free will* against *bound will*, or that of your Sermons against your Narrative; and am insensibly come to the Vindication, give me leave, Sir, to speak a word also for that performance and the author of it.

You say he has "*attempted a vindication of the Minutes*;" but do not some people think he has likewise *executed* it? and have you proved he has not?

You reply, *There would be a great impropriety in my giving a full and particular answer to those letters, because the author did all he could to revoke them, and has given me ample satisfaction in his letter of submission*. Indeed, Sir, you quite mistook the nature of that *submission*; it had absolutely no reference to the *arguments* of the Vindication. It only respected the *polemic dress* in which the Vindicator had put them. You might have been convinced of it by this paragraph of his letter of submission. "I was just going to preach when I had the news of your happy accommodation, and was no sooner out of church, than I wrote to beg my Vindication might not appear in the *dress* in which I had put it. I did not then, nor do I yet repent having written upon the Minutes; but *as matters are now*, I am very sorry I did not write in a general manner, without taking notice of the circular letter and mentioning

mentioning your dear name." He begs therefore you will not consider his letter of submission as a reason not to give a *full or particular answer* to his ARGUMENTS: On the contrary, if you can prove they want solidity, a *letter of thanks* shall follow his *letter of submission*; if he is wrong, he *sincerely* desires to be set right.

You add however, that he has *broken the Minutes into sentences and half sentences, and by refining upon each of the detached particles has given a new turn to the Whole*. But he appeals to every impartial Reader whether he has not, like a candid man, first considered them all together; and then every one afunder. He begs to be informed whether an artist can better inquire into the goodness of a watch, than by making first his observations on the whole movement in general, and then by taking it to pieces, that he may examine every part with greater attention. And he desires you would shew whether what you are pleased to call a new turn, is not preferable to the heretical turn some persons give them; and whether it is not equally, if not better adapted to the literal meaning of the words, as well as more agreeable to the antinomian state of the Church, the general tenor of the propositions, and the system of doctrine maintained by Mr. W. for near 40 years.

The Vindicator objects likewise to your asserting, page 21, that *when he first saw the Minutes, he expressed to Lady Huntingdon his ABHORRENCE of them*: Had you said *surprize*, the expression would have been strictly just; but that of *abhorrence* is far too strong. Her Ladyship, who testified her *detestation* of them in the strongest terms, might easily mistake his *abhorrence* of the sense fixed upon the Minutes, for an abhorrence of the Minutes themselves; but she may recollect that far from ever granting they had that sense, he said again and again, even in their first conversation upon them, "Certainly, my Lady, Mr. W. can mean no such thing: he will explain himself."

E. 3.

But

But supposing he had at first been so far wrought upon by the jealous fears of Lady Huntingdon, as to express as great an *abhorrence* of the Minutes, as the mistaken disciples did of the person of our Lord, when they took him for an apparition, and *cried out for fear*; would this excuse either him or you, Sir, for resolutely continuing in a mistake, in the midst of a variety of means and calls to get out of it? And if the Vindicator, before he had weighed the Minutes in the balance of the sanctuary, had a mind to take his pen, and condemn them as dangerously legal, what can you fairly conclude from it, but that he is not partial to Mr. W.; and has also "leaned so much towards Calvinism," as not instantly to discover and *rejoice in the truth*?

In your last page you take your friendly leave of the Vindicator, by saying you *desire in love to cast a veil over all apparent mistakes of his judgment on this occasion*; but as he is not conscious of *all* these *apparent mistakes*, he begs you would in love take off the veil you have cast upon them, that he may see, and rectify at least those which are capital.

III. And that you may not hastily conclude he was *mistaken* in his vindication of the article that touches upon *Merit*, he embraces this opportunity of presenting you with another quotation from the John Wesley of the last century, he means Mr. Baxter, the most judicious divine, as well as the greatest, most useful, and most laborious preacher of his age.

In his *Catholic Theology*, answering the objections of an Antinomian, he says: *Merit* is a word I perceive you are against, you may therefore chuse any other of the same signification, and we will forbear this rather than offend you. But yet tell me, (1.) What if the words *αξις* and *αξια* were translated *deserving* and *merit*, would it not be as true a translation as *worthy* and *worthiness*, when it is the same thing that is meant? (2.) Do not all the ancient Teachers of the Churches, since the Apostles,

Apostles, particularly apply the names *eterni* and *meriti* to believers? And if you persuade men that all these teachers were Papists, will you not persuade most that believe you, to be Papists too? (3.) Are not *reward* and *merit* or *desert* relative words, as *punishment* and *guilt*, *master* and *servant*, *husband* and *wife*? And is there any reward which is not *meriti præmium*, the reward of some merit? Again, -

Is it not the second article of our faith, and next to *believing there is a God*, that *He is the REWARDER of them that diligently seek him*? When you thus extirpate faith and godliness, on pretence of crying down *merit*, you see what *over-doing* tends to. And indeed by the same reason that men deny a *reward* to duty (the faultiness being pardoned through Christ) they would infer there is no *punishment* for sin; for if God will not do good to the righteous, neither will he do evil to the wicked; he is like the God of Epicurus, he does not trouble himself about us, nor about the merit or demerit of our actions. But David knew better, *The Lord*, says he, *plenteously REWARDETH the proud doers*, and *verily there is a REWARD for the righteous*, for *there is a God that judgeth the earth*, that sees matter of praise or dispraise, rewardableness or worthiness of punishment in all the actions of men. This is, Sir, all Mr. Baxter and Mr. W. mean by *merit* or *demerit*; and if the Vindicator is wrong for thinking they are both in the right, please to remove the *veil* that conceals his *mistake*.

IV. As one of his correspondents desires him to explain himself a little more upon the article of the Minutes which respects *undervaluing ourselves*; and as you probably place the arguments he has advanced upon that head among his *apparent mistakes*, he takes likewise this opportunity of making some additional observations on that delicate subject.

How

How we can *esteem every man better than ourselves*, and ourselves the *chief of sinners*, or the *least of saints*, seems not so much a calculation for the understanding, as for the lowly, contrite and loving heart. It puzzles the former, but the latter at once makes it out. Nevertheless the seeming contradiction may perhaps be reconciled to reason by these reflections.

(1.) If friendship brings the greatest monarch down from his throne, and makes him sit on the same couch with his favourites; may not brotherly love, much more powerful than natural friendship, may not humility excited by the example of Christ washing his disciples feet; may not a deep regard for that precept, *he that will be greatest among you let him be the least of all*, sink the true christian in the dust, and make him lie in spirit at the feet of every one?

(2.) A well-bred person uncovers himself, bows, and declares even to his inferiors, that he is their "most humble servant." This affected civility of the world is but an apish imitation of the genuine humility of the church; and if those who customarily speak humble words without meaning may yet be honest men, how much more the saints, who have *truth written in their inward parts*, and *speak out of the abundance of their humble hearts*!

(3.) He who walks in the light of divine love sees something of God's spiritual, moral, or natural image in all men, the worst not excepted; and at the sight, that which is merely creaturely in him (by a kind of spiritual instinct found in all who *are born of the spirit*) directly bows to that which is of God in another. He imitates the captain of a first rate man of war, who, upon seeing the King or Queen coming up in a small boat, forgetting the enormous size of his ship, or considering it is the King's own ship, immediately strikes his colours; and the greater vessel, consistently with wisdom and truth, pays respect to the less.

(4.)

(4.) The most eminent saint, having known more of the workings of corruption in his own breast, than he can possibly know of the wickedness of any other man's heart, may with great truth (according to his present views and former feelings of the internal evil he has overcome) call himself *the chief of sinners*.

(5.) Nor does he know but if the feeblest believers had had all his talents and graces, with all his opportunities of doing and receiving good, they would have made far superior advances in the christian life; and in this view also, without hypocritical humility, he prefers the least saint to himself. Thus, although according to the humble light of *others*, all true believers certainly *undervalue*, yet according to *their own* humble light, they make a true estimate of *themselves*.

V. The Vindicator having thus solved a problem of godliness, which you have undoubtedly ranked among his *apparent mistakes*, he takes the liberty of presenting you with a list of some of your own "apparent mistakes on this occasion."

(1.) In the very letter in which you recant your circular letter, you desire Mr. W. to *give up the fatal errors of the Minutes*, though you have not yet proved they contain one; you still affirm *they appear to you evidently subversive of the fundamentals of christianity*, that is in plain English, still "dreadfully heretical;" and you produce a letter which asserts also, without shadow of proof, that the *Minutes were given for the establishment of another foundation than that which is laid*,—that they are *repugnant to scripture, the whole plan of man's salvation under the new covenant of grace, and also to the clear meaning of our established Church, as well as to all other protestant Churches*.

(2.) You declare in your Narrative, that *when you cast your eye over the Minutes you are just where you was*, and assure the public that *nothing inferior*

te

to an ATTACK UPON THE FOUNDATION of our hope, through the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, could have been an object sufficient to engage you in its defence : Thus, by continuing to insinuate such an ATTACK was really made, you continue to wound Mr. W. in the tenderest part.

(3.) Although Mr. W. and 53 of his fellow-labourers have let you quietly *secure the foundation* (which, by the bye, had been only shaken in your own ideas, and was perfectly secured by these express words of the Minutes, "not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Christ") yet far from allowing them to *secure the superstructure* in their turn, which would be nothing but just, you begin already a contest with them about *our second justification by works in the day of judgment*.

(4.) Instead of frankly acknowledging the rashness of your step, and the greatness of your mistake, with respect to the Minutes, you make a bad matter worse, by treating the Declaration as you have treated them; forcing upon it a dangerous sense; no less contrary to the scriptures, than to Mr. W.'s meaning, and the import of the words.

(5.) When you speak of the dreadful charges you have brought against the Minutes, you softly call them *misconstructions* you MAY SEEM to have made of their meaning, Page 22. Line 4. Nor is your *Acknowledgment* much stronger than your *may seem*; at least it does not appear to many, adequate to the hurt done by your circular letter to the practical gospel of Christ, and the reputation of his eminent servant, thousands of whose friends you have grieved, offended, or stumbled; while you have confirmed thousands of his enemies in their hard thoughts of him, and in their unjust contempt of his ministry.

(6.) And lastly, far from candidly enquiring into the merit of the arguments advanced in the Vindication, you represent them as mere *metaphysical distinctions*; or cast, as a veil over them, a friendly,

friendly submissive *letter of condolence*, which was never intended for the use to which you have put it.

Therefore the Vindicator, who does not admire a peace founded upon a *may seem* on your part, and on Mr. W.'s part upon a *Declaration*, to which you have already fixed a wrong, unscriptural sense of your own; takes this public method to inform you, he thinks his arguments in favour of Mr. W.'s anti-Crispian propositions, rational, scriptural, and solid; and once more he begs you would remove the veil you have hitherto "cast over all the apparent mistakes of his judgment on this occasion" that he may see whether the *antinomian* gospel of Dr. Crisp is preferable to the *practical* gospel which Mr. W. endeavours to restore to its primitive and scriptural lustre.

VI. Having thus finished my remarks upon the mistakes of your Narrative, I gladly take my leave of controversy for this time: Would to God it were for ever! I do no more like it than I do applying a caustic to the back of my friends; it is disagreeable to me and painful to them, and, nevertheless, it must be done when their health and mine is at stake.

I assure you, Sir, I do not love the warlike dress of the Vindicator any more than David did the heavy armour of Saul. With gladness therefore I cast it aside to throw myself at your feet, and protest to you that although I thought it my *duty* to write to you with the utmost *plainness*, *frankness*, and *honesty*; the design of doing it with *bitterness* never entered my heart. However, for every "*bitter expression*" that may have dropped from my sharp vindicating pen, I ask you pardon; but it must be *in general*, for neither friends nor foes have yet *particularly* pointed out to me *one* such expression.

You have accepted of a *letter of submission* from me; let, I beseech you, a concluding paragraph of *submission* meet also with your favourable acceptance.

ance. You condescend, rev. Sir, to call me your "learned friend." *Learning* is an accomplishment I never pretended to; but your *friendship* is an honor I shall always highly esteem, and do at this time value above my own brother's love. Appearances are a little against me, I feel I am a thorn in your flesh; but I am persuaded it is a *necessary* one; and this persuasion reconciles me to the thankless and disagreeable part I act.

If Ephraim must vex Judah, let Judah bear with Ephraim; till, happily tired of their contention; they feel the truth of Terence's words, * *Amantium ira amoris redintegratio est*. I can assure you, my dear Sir, without metaphysical distinction, I love and honor you, as truly as I dislike the rashness of your well-meant zeal. The motto I thought myself obliged to follow was † *Ex bello pax*; but that which I delight in is ‡ *In bello pax*; may we make them harmonize till we learn war and polemic divinity no more!

My Vindication cost me tears of fear; lest I should have wounded you too deep. That fear, I find, was groundless; but should you feel a little for the great truths and the great minister I vindicate, these expostulations will wound me, and probably cost me tears again.

If in the mean time we offend our weak brethren; let us do something to lessen the offence till it is removed. Let us shew them we make war without so much as shyness. Should you ever come to the next county, as you did last summer, honor me with a line, and I shall gladly wait upon you, and shew you (if you permit me) the way to my pulpit, where I shall think myself highly favoured to see you "secure the foundation," and hear you inforce the doctrine of *justification by faith*,

* The misunderstandings of lovers (why not of believers) end in a renewal and increase of love.

† We make war in order to get peace.

‡ We enjoy peace in the midst of war.

which you fear we attack. And should I ever be within 30 miles of the city where you reside, I shall go to submit myself to you, and beg leave to assist you in reading prayers for you, or giving the cup with you. Thus shall we convince the world that controversy may be conscientiously carried on without interruption of brotherly love; and I shall have the peculiar pleasure of testifying to you in person, how sincerely I am,

Honored and dear Sir,

Your submissive and obedient servant
in the bond of a *practical* gospel,

J. F.

T H I R D L E T T E R.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

IF I mistake not the workings of my heart, a concern for St. James's *pure and undefiled religion* excites me to take the pen once more, and may account for the readiness with which I have met you in the dangerous field of controversy. You may possibly think mere partiality to Mr. W. has inspired me with that boldness; and others may be ready to say as Eliab, *We know the pride and naughtiness of thy heart: Thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle:* But may I not answer with David? *Is there not a cause?*

Is it not highly necessary to make a stand against *Antinomianism*? Is not that gigantic *Man of Sin* a more dangerous enemy to king Jesus, than the champion of the Philistines was to king Saul? Has he not defied more than forty days the armies and arms, the people and truths of the living God? By audaciously daring the thousands in Israel, has he not made all the faint-hearted among them ashamed to *stand in the whole armour of God*, afraid to defend the important post of *Duty*? And have not many left it already, openly running away, flying into the dens and caves of earthly-mindedness, *putting their light under a bushel*, and even burying themselves alive in the noisome grave of profaneness?

Multitudes indeed still keep the field, still make an open profession of godliness. But how few of *these endure hardship* as good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

How

How many have already cast away *the shield of gospel faith*, the faith which works by love! What numbers dread the Cross, the heavenly standard they should steadily bear, or resolutely follow! Whilst in pompous speeches they extol that of Jesus; how do they upon the most frivolous pretence refuse to *take up* their own! Did the massy staff of Goliath's spear seem more terrible to the frightened Israelites, than the *daily cross* to those dastardly followers of the Crucified? What Boanerges can spirit them up, and lead them on *from conquering to conquer*? Who can even make them look the enemy in the face? Alas! *in their heart they are already gone back to Egypt. Their faces are but half Stoward.* They give way,—they *draw back*;—O may it not be *to perdition*! May not the King of terrors overtake them in their retreat, and make them as great monuments of God's vengeance against cowardly soldiers, as Lot's wife was of his indignation against halting racers!

But setting allegory aside, permit me, Sir, to pour my fears into your bosom, and tell you with the utmost plainness my distressing thoughts of the religious world.

For some years I have suspected there is more imaginary than *unfeigned faith*, in most of those who pass for believers. With a mixture of indignation and grief have I seen them carelessly follow the stream of corrupt nature, against which they should have manfully wrestled: And by the most preposterous mistake, when they should have exclaimed against their † *Antinomianism*, I have heard them cry out against “the † *Legality* of their wicked hearts; which, they

† The word *Antinomianism* is derived from two Greek words *anti* and *nomos*, which signify *against the law*; and the word *Legal* from the Latin *legalis*, which means *agreeable to the law*.

† The *legality* contended for in these letters is not a *stumbling at Christ*, and a *going about to establish our own righteousness by faithless works*: This sin, which the Scripture calls *unbelief*, would

they said, still suggested they were to *do something* in order to salvation." Glad was I therefore, when I had attentively considered Mr. W.'s Minutes, to find they were levelled at the very errors, which gave rise to an evil I had long lamented in secret but had wanted courage to resist and attack.

I.

This evil is † *Antinomianism*; that is, any kind of doctrinal or practical *opposition to God's law* which is the perfect rule of right, and the moral picture of the God of love, drawn in miniature by our Lord in these two exquisite precepts, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.*

As the law is good if a man use it lawfully, so † legality is excellent if it is evangelical. The external respect shewn by pharisees to the law, is but feigned and hypocritical legality. Pharisees are no more truly legal than Antinomians are truly evangelical. *Had ye believed Moses*, says Jesus to people of that stamp, *ye would have believed me*: but in your heart you hate his law, as much as you do my gospel.

We see no less gospel in the preface of the ten commandments, *I am the Lord thy God*, &c. than we do legality in the middle of our Lord's Sermon on the mount, *I say whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart.* Nevertheless the latter has in all things the pre eminence over the former, for if the law shortly prefaced by the gospel came by Moses; Grace, the

would no more countenance than murder. The evangelical legality I want to see all in love with, is a cleaving to Christ by a faith which works righteousness; a following him as he went about doing good; and a shewing by St. James's works that we have St. Paul's faith.

† See the note on this word in the preceding page.

gracious.

gracious, the full display of the gospel, *and Truth*, the true explanation and fulfilling of the law, *came by Jesus Christ*.

This evangelical law should appear to us *sweeter than the honey-comb* and *more precious than fine gold*. We should continually spread the tables of our hearts before our heavenly Lawgiver, beseeching him to write it there with his own finger, the powerful Spirit of life and love: But alas! God's commandments are disregarded; they are represented as the needless or impracticable sanctions of that superannuated legalist, *Moses*; and if we express our veneration for them, we are looked upon as people who were always strangers to the gospel, or are fallen into the Galatian state.

Not so David: he was so great an admirer of God's law, that he declares the godly man *doth meditate therein day and night*; he expresses his transcendent value for it, under the synonymous expressions of *Law, word, statutes, testimonies, precepts* and *commandments* in almost every verse of the 119th Psalm. And he says of himself, *O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day*.

St. Paul was as evangelically legal as David; for he knew the law is as much contained in the gospel, as the tables of stone, on which the moral law was written, were contained in the ark. He therefore assured the Corinthians, that *though he had all faith*, even that which is most uncommon, and worked the greatest wonders, it would *profit him nothing*, unless it was accompanied by *charity*, unless it *worked by love*, which is *the fulfilling of the law*; the excellency of faith arising from the excellent end it answers in producing and nourishing love.

Should it be objected, that St. Paul says to the Galatians, *I through the law am dead to the law that I might live to God*, and to the Romans, *Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ*: I answer: In the Apostle's days that expression the Law frequently meant the whole Mosaic dispensation; and in that sense every believer is dead to it, dead.

to all that *Christ* has not adopted. For, (1.) he is dead to the *Levitical Law*, *Christ having abolished in himself the law of ordinances, Touch not, taste not, handle not.* (2.) He is dead to the *ceremonial Law*, which was only a *shadow of good things to come*, a typical representation of *Christ* and the blessing flowing from his sacrifice. (3.) He is dead to the *curse* attending his past violations of the *moral law*, for *Christ hath delivered us from the CURSE of the law, being made a curse for us.* And lastly, he is dead to the hopes of recommending himself to God, by the *merit* of his obedience of the *moral law*; for in point of *merit*, he is determined to know nothing but *Christ and him crucified.*

To make St. Paul mean more than this, is (1.) to make him maintain that no believer can sin; for if *sin is the transgression of the law*, and “the law is dead and buried,” it is plain no believer can sin, as no body can transgress a law which is abolished; for *where no law is, there is no transgression.* (2.) It is to make him contradict St. James, who exhorts us to *fulfil the royal LAW according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And (3.) It is to make him contradict himself: for he charges the Galatians *by love to serve one another, all the law being fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* And he assures the Hebrews that, under the new covenant, believers, far from being *without God’s Laws*, have *them written in their hearts: God himself places them in their minds.* We cannot therefore with any shadow of justice put Dr. Crisp’s coat upon the Apostle, and press him into the service of Antinomians.

And did our Lord side with Antinomians? Just the reverse. Far from repealing the two above mentioned royal precepts, he asserts, that *on them hang all the Law and the Prophets*; and had the four gospels been then written, he would no doubt have represented them as subservient to the establishing of the *Law*, as he did the book of *Isaiah*, the evangelical Prophet. Such high thoughts had He of the Law, that

that when a Lawyer expressed his veneration for it, by declaring that the *love of God and our neighbour was more than all the whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices*; Jesus seeing that he had answered discreetly, said unto him: *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*

The gospel itself terminates in the fulfilling of the commandments: For as the curse of the law like the scourge of a severe schoolmaster drives; so the gospel like a loving guide brings us to Christ, the great law-fulfiller, in whom we find inexhaustible treasures of pardon and power; of pardon for past breaches of the law, and of power for present obedience to it. Nor are we sooner come to Him, than he magnifies the law by his precepts, as he formerly did by his obedience unto death. *If Ye love me, says he, keep my commandments: This is his commandment that we should love one another; and he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

Again, the gospel displays Jesus's dying love, that by believing it we may love him; that is, have everlasting life, the life of love which abideth when the life of faith is no more. Hence St. John sums up christianity in these words, *We love him because he first loved us*; and what is it to love Jesus, but to fulfil the whole law at once, to love God and man, the Creator and the Creature, united in one divinely human person?

Did the Son of God magnify the Law that we might vilify it? Did he make it honorable that we might make it contemptible? Did he come to fulfil it that we might be discharged from fulfilling it according to our capacity? that is, discharged from loving God and our neighbour? discharged from the employment and joys of heaven? No: the Word was never made flesh for this dreadful end. None but Satan could have become incarnate to go upon such an infernal errand as this. Standing therefore upon the rock of evangelical truth, we ask with St. Paul, *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Nay, we establish the law.* We point sinners to that Saviour, in and from whom they

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may continually have the law-fulfilling power, *that the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.*

Such are the glorious and delightful views, which the Scripture gives us of the Law disarmed of its curse in Christ, the Law of holy, humble love, so strongly enforced in the discourses, and sweetly exemplified in the life and death of the *Prophet-like unto Moses*!—So amiable, so precious is the book of the law, when delivered to us by Jesus, sprinkled with his atoning blood, and explained by his loving Spirit! And so true is St. Paul's assertion, *We are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ*!

Instead then of dressing up the Law as a scarecrow, let us in our degree *magnify it, and make it honorable* as did our Lord. Instead of representing it as "an intolerable yoke of bondage," let us call it with St. Paul *the Law of Christ*, and with St. James *the perfect law of LIBERTY*. And let every true believer say with David, *I love thy commandments above gold and precious stones: I shall alway keep thy law, yea for ever and ever: I will walk at LIBERTY for I seek thy precepts.*

But alas! how few give us these evangelical views of the law, and practical views of the gospel! How many intimate Christ has *fulfilled all righteousness*, that we might be the children of God with hearts *full of unrighteousness*! If some insist upon our *fulfilling all righteousness* also, is it not chiefly when they want to draw us into their peculiarities, and dip us into their narrow denomination? And what number, under the fair pretence that they "have a living law *written in their hearts*," insinuate, "there is no need of preaching the law" to them, either to shew them more of God's purity, to dear the atoning blood, regulate their conduct, or convince them of the necessity of *perfecting* *liness*!

But suppose these Objectors have, as they say, *law written in their inward parts*, (which the actions

actions and tempers of some make rather doubtful,) is the writing so *perfectly finished*, that no one stroke needs be added to it? Is not the law an important part of *the word of righteousness*? And could not the Holy Ghost re-touch the writing, or deepen the engraving, by the ministry of *the word of righteousness*? Again, if the internal teachings of the holy spirit supersede the *letter* of the law, must they not by the same reason supersede the *letter* of the gospel? Is there any more need of *preaching* the gospel than the law to believers? Or have they not the gospel *written in their hearts*, as well as the law?

At what amazing heights of unscriptural perfection must our Objectors suppose themselves! What palpable errors do they run into, that they may have the honor of passing for evangelical! And who will envy them the glory of countenancing the antinomian delusion, by standing in direct opposition to Christ, who thus decides the controversy: *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*, either in what it requires or denounces; for the law is *fulfilled* not only when its precepts are obeyed, but when rewards are given to the observers, and punishments inflicted upon the violators, of it. *Whosoever therefore shall do my commandments, and TEACH them, shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Do not imagine, Rev. Sir, I thus cry up God's Law, to drown the late cries of *heresy* and *apostacy*. I appeal to matter of fact and your own observations. Consider the religious world, and say, if ANTI-NOMIANISM is not in general a motto better adapted to the state of professing Congregations, Societies, Families, and Individuals, than *Holiness unto the Lord*, the inscription that should be even upon our *horses bells*.

II.

II.

Begin with *Congregations*, and cast first your eyes upon the *Hearers*. In general they have curious *itching ears*, and *will not endure sound doctrine*. Many of them are armed with *the breastplate of a righteousness* which they have vainly † imputed to themselves: they have on the showy *helmet of a presumptuous hope*, and hold fast the impenetrable shield of strong prejudice. With these they *quench the fiery darts* of convincing Truth, and stand undaunted under volleys of reproof.

They say, they “will have nothing but Christ:” And who could blame them, if they would have Christ in all his offices? Christ with all his parables and sermons, cautions and precepts, reproofs and exhortations, exhortations and threatnings? Christ preaching to the multitudes upon a mountain, as well as honorably teaching in the temple? Christ fasting in the wilderness, or praying in Geth-

† Our imputation of Christ’s righteousness to ourselves is a trick of our antinomian hearts, and is a dreadful delusion: but God’s imputing of Christ’s righteousness to true believers is a most blessed reality, for which we cannot too much contend. *He speaks the word and it is done*; his imputation is not an *idea*, but a fiat, wh-rever it takes place, *Jehovah our righteousness*, or *Christ the righteous dwells in the heart by faith*. I wish that with respect to *imputed righteousness*, we paid more regard to the late Mr. Hart’s sentiment. This experienced and *sound Calvinist*, in the account of his conversion, prefixed to his hymns, says with great truth: “As much as Lazarus coming out of the grave, and feeling himself restored to life, differed from those who only saw the miracle, or believed the fact told them; so great is the difference between a soul’s *real* coming to Christ out of himself, and having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him by the precious faith of God’s elect; and a man’s bare believing the doctrine of imputed righteousness, because he sees it contained in the scripture, or assenting to the truth of it when proposed to his understanding by others.”

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femane; as well as Christ making the multitudes sit down upon the grass to receive *loaves and fishes*, or promising *thrones* to his disciples? Christ *constraining them to get into a ship*, and *toil in rowing all night with a contrary wind*; as well as Christ *coming in the morning*, and causing *the ship to be immediately at the land whither they went*? Christ upon mount Calvary as well as Christ upon mount Tabor? In a word, Who would find fault with them, if they would have Christ with his poverty and self-denial, his reproach and cross, his spirit and graces, his prophets and apostles, his plain apparel and mean followers?

But alas! It is not so. They will have *what* they please of Christ, and that too *as* they please. If he comes accompanied by legal Moses and honest Elijah, who talk of the crucifixion of the body and *decease* of the flesh, they can do very well without him. If he preaches free grace, free will, faithfulness, or heavenly-mindedness, some turn to the right, some wheel about to the left, others go directly back, and all agree to say or think, *This is an hard saying, who can hear it?*

They admire him in one chapter, and know not what to make of him in another. Some of his words they extol to the sky, and others they seem to be ashamed of. If he asserts his authority as a Lawgiver, they are ready to treat him with as little ceremony as they do Moses. If he says, *Keep my commandments, I am a King*: like the Jews of old they rise against the awful declaration; or they *crown him* as a *surety*, the better to *set him at nought* as a *monarch*. And if he adds to his ministers, *I am the Prophet that was to come, go in my name and TEACH ALL nations to OBSERVE ALL THINGS whatsoever I have COMMANDED you*; they complain, "This is the law; give us the gospel, we can relish nothing but the gospel."

They have no idea of *eating the paschal lamb whole, his head with his legs, and the purtenance thereof*; nor do they take care of not breaking his *bons*: They do not like him *roast with fire* neither;

ther; but *raw*, or *sodden with water* out of their own *broken cisterns*: If you present him to them as the type of the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*, and *maketh an end of it*; their hearts heave, they say, *Pray have me excused* from thus feeding upon him; and though it is said, *Ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning, you shall eat it in haste*, they postpone, they beg leave to keep it till the article of death: And if in the mean time you talk to them of *bitter herbs*, they marvel at your Jewish legal taste, and complain that you spoil the gospel feast.

They do not consider we must *give every one his portion of meat*, or proper medicine *in due season*; and that sweet things are not always wholesome. They forget we must *leave all* antinomian refinements *to follow Christ*, who sometimes says to decent pharisees, *How can you escape the damnation of hell!* And to a beloved disciple that shuns the cross, *Satan! thou savourest not the things of God, but the things of men.* They will have nothing but the atonement. Nor do they chuse to remember that St. Paul, who *did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God*, preached Christ to Felix by *reasoning of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come.*

Hence it is that some preachers must chuse comfortable subjects to please their hearers; just as those who make an entertainment for nice persons, are obliged to study what will suit their difficult taste. A multitude of important scriptures can be produced, on which no minister, who is unwilling to lose his reputation as an evangelical preacher, must dare to speak in some pulpits, unless it is to explain away or enervate their meaning. Take some instances.

The good old Calvinists (Archbishop Leighton for one) questioned whether a man was truly converted who did not sincerely *go on to perfection*, and rtilly endeavour to *perfect holiness in the fear of* : but now if we only quote such passages with emphasis, and inforce their meaning with some degree

degree of earnestness, the truth of our conversion is suspected: We even pass for enemies to Christ's righteousness.

If we have courage to handle such scriptures as these, *To do good and to distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—Shew me thy faith by thy works.—Was not Rahab justified by works? By works was Abraham's faith made perfect, &c.* The bare giving out of our text prejudices our Antinomian hearers against us, and robs us of their candid attention; unless they expect a Charity-Sermon: For on such an occasion they will yet allow us, at the close of our discourse, to speak honorably of good works: just as those who run to the opposite extreme, will yet, on some particular days, such as Christmas and Good-Friday, permit us to make honorable mention of Jesus Christ.

The evil would be tolerable, if we were only obliged to select smooth texts in order to gratify an Antinomian audience; but alas! it is grown so desperate, that unless we *adulterate the sincere milk of the word*, many reject it as poison. It is a doubt whether we could preach in some celebrated pulpits on *the good man, who is merciful and lendeth, who hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor, and whose righteousness remaineth for ever,—or on breaking off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor,—or on the righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,—or on the robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb*, without giving general disgust; unless, to keep in the good grace of our Nicolaitan hearers, we were to dissent from all sober commentators, and offer the greatest violence to the context, our own conscience, and common sense, by saying that the *righteousness* and *robes* mentioned in those passages, are Christ's imputed, and not our performed obedience.

How few of our evangelical congregations would bear from the pulpit an honest explanation of what they allow us to read in the desk! We may open our service by saying, that *When the wicked*

man turneth away from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; but woe to us, if we handle that scripture in the pulpit, unless we wrest it by representing Christ as *the wicked man who DOES that which is lawful and right, to save our souls alive*, without any of our DOINGS.

Were we to preach upon these words of our Lord, *This no and thou shalt live*, Luke x. 25; the sense of which is fixed by the 37th Ps. *Go and do thou likewise*; or only to handle without deceit those common words of the Lord's prayer, confirmed by a plain parable, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*; our reputation as Protestants would be in as much danger from the bulk of some congregations, as our persons from the fire of a whole regiment in the day of battle. How would such a discourse, and the *poor, blind man* that preached it, be privately exclaimed against; or publicly * exposed in a *Magazine* presented to the world under the sacred name of *Gospel*!

In short, whoever has courage enough to preach as St. Paul did at Athens, at Lystra, and before Felix, rebuking sin without respect of persons: whoever will imitate St. Peter, and *exhort* all his hearers to *SAVE THEMSELVES from this perverse generation*, assuring them that *the promise of the Holy Spirit is unto THEM, and their CHILDREN*; must expect to be looked upon as unfound, if not as an enemy to free grace, and a fetter forth of Pelagian or Popish doctrines. Moderate Calvinists themselves must run the gauntlet, if they preach *free grace* like St. Peter. A pious clergyman, noted for his strong attachment to what some call *the doctrines of grace*, was, to my knowledge, highly blamed by one part of his auditory, for having preached to the other *repentance towards God*, and exhorted them to call on him for mercy: And I remember he just saved his sinking

* This was actually the case some months ago, with respect to a sermon preached by Mr. Wesley.

reputation as a *sound* divine, by pleading, that two Apostles exhorted even Simon Magus to *repent of his wickedness, and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.*

When such professors will not bear the plainest truth, from ministers whose sentiments agree with theirs; how will they rise against deeper truths advanced by those who are of a different opinion! Some will even lose all decency. Observing, in preaching last summer, one of them remarkably busy in disturbing all around him, when the service was over I went up to him, and inquired into the cause of the dissatisfaction he had so indecently expressed. "I am not afraid to tell it to your face," said he; "I do not like your doctrine: You are a free-willer." If I have spoken evil, replied I, bear witness of the evil. He paused a while, and then charged me with praying before the sermon, as if *all* might be saved. "That is false doctrine," added he, and if Christ himself came down from heaven to preach it, I would not believe him."

I wondered at first at the positiveness of my rigid objector; but upon second thoughts, I thought him modest, in comparison of those numbers of professors, who see that Christ actually came down from heaven, and preached the doctrine of perfection in his sermon upon the mount, and yet will face us down that it is an Anti-Christian doctrine.

This Antinomian cavilling of hearers against preachers is deplorable; and the effects of it will be dreadful. If the Lord does not put a stop to this growing evil, we shall soon see every where, what we see in too many places; self-conceited, unhumbled men, rising against the truths and ministers of God,—men who *are not meek doers of the law, but insolent judges*, preposterously trying the law by which they shall soon be tried—men, who instead of sitting as criminals before all the messengers of their Judge, with arrogance invade the Judge's tribunal, and arraign even his most venerate

nable ambassadors—men who should *fall on their faces before all, and give glory to God, by confessing that He is with his ministers of every denomination of a truth*; but who, far from doing it, boldly condemn the word that condemns them, snatch the two-edged sword from the mouth of every faithful messenger, blunt the edge of it, and audaciously thrust at him in their turn—men who, when they see a servant of God in the pulpit, suppose he stands at their bar; try him with as much insolence as Corah, Datkan and Abiram tried Moses; cast him with less kindness than Pilate did Jesus; force a fool's coat of their own making upon him; and then, from *the seat of the scornful*, pronounce the decisive sentence: “He is legal, dark, blind, unconverted; an enemy to free grace:—He is a rank Papist, a Jesuit, a false Prophet, or a wolf in sheep's clothing.”

III.

But whence springs this almost general antinomianism of our congregations? Shall I conceal the sore because it festers in my own breast? Shall I be partial? No, in the name of Him who is *no respecter of persons*, I will confess my sin, and that of many of my brethren. Though I am the least, and (I write it with tears of shame) the most unworthy of them all, I will follow the dictates of my conscience, and use the authority of a Minister of Christ. If Balaam, a *false* Prophet, took in good part the reproof of his ass, I should wrong my honored Brethren and Fathers, the *true* Prophets of the Lord, if I feared their resenting some well-meant reproofs, which I first level at myself, and for which I heartily wish there was no occasion.

Is not the antinomianism of hearers fomented by
 t of preachers? Does it not become us to take
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the greatest part of the blame upon ourselves, according to the old adage, "Like priest, like people?" Is it surprising that some of us should have an antinomian audience? Do we not make or keep it so? When did we preach such a practical sermon as that of our Lord on the mount, or write such close letters as the Epistles of St. John? Alas! I doubt it is but seldom. Not living so near to God ourselves as we should, we are afraid to come near to the consciences of our people. The Jews said to our Lord, *In so saying thou reproachest us*; but now the case is altered; and our auditors might say to many of us, "In so saying you would reproach yourselves."

Some prefer popularity to plain-dealing. We love to see a croud of worldly-minded hearers rather than a *little flock, a peculiar people zealous of good works*. We dare not shake our congregations to purpose, lest our *five thousand* should in three years time be reduced to *an hundred and twenty*.

Luther's advice to Melancthon, *Scandaliza fortiter*, "So preach that those who do not fall out with their sins, may fall out with thee," is more and more unfashionable. Under pretence of drawing our hearers by love, some of us softly rock the cradle of carnal security in which they sleep. For "fear of grieving the dear children of God," we let *buyers and sellers, sheep and oxen*, yea goats and lions, fill the temple undisturbed. And because "the bread must not be kept from the hungry children," we let those who are *wanton* make shameful waste of it, and even allow *dogs* which we should be-ware of, and noisy parrots that can speak *shibboleth*, to do the same. We forget that *God's children are led by his Spirit*, who is the Comforter himself: that they are all afraid of being deceived, all *jealous for the Lord of hosts*; and therefore prefer a preacher who *searches Jerusalem with candles*, and cannot suffer *God's house to be made a den of thieves* to a workman who *white-washes* the noisome sepulchres

he should open; and *daubs* over with *untempered mortar* the bulging walls he should demolish.

The old Puritans strongly insisted upon *personal holiness*, and the first Methodists upon the *new birth*; but these doctrines seem to grow out of date. The gospel is cast into another mould. People it seems may now be *in Christ* without being *new creatures*; or new creatures without casting *old things* away. They may be God's children without God's image; and *born of the Spirit* without the *fruits of the Spirit*. If our unregenerate hearers get orthodox ideas about the way of salvation in their heads, evangelical phrases concerning Jesus's love in their mouths, and a warm zeal for our party and favourite forms in their hearts; without any more ado we help them to rank themselves among the children of God. But alas! this self-adoption into the family of Christ will no more pass in heaven, than self-imputation of Christ's righteousness. The work of the spirit will stand there, and that alone. Again,

Some of us often give our congregations particular accounts of *the covenant* between the persons of the blessed Trinity, and speak of it as confidently as if the King of kings had admitted us members of his privy council; but how seldom do we do justice to the scriptures where the covenant is mentioned in a *practical* manner! How rarely do the ministers who are fond of preaching upon the Covenant between God and David, dwell upon such scriptures as these! *Because they continued not in my covenant I regarded them not; because they have transgressed the Law, changed the Ordinances, and broken the Everlasting Covenant, therefore hath the curse devoured the Earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. I say to the wicked what hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth? — They kept not the covenant of God and refused to walk in his law; they would not be evangelically legal, therefore*

wherefore a fire was kindled in Jacob, the wrath of God came upon them, he slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen, the elect of Israel!

We frequently keep back from our hearers the very portions that honest Nathan, or blunt John the Baptist would have particularly inforced. The taste of many is perverted, they *loath the manna* of the word, not because it is *light*, but *heavy food*: They must have *savory meat*, such as *their soul loveth*; and we *hunt for venison*; we minister to their spiritual luxury, and feast with them on our own doctrinal refinements. Hence *many are weak and sickly among us*? Some that might be *fat and well-liking*, cry out, *My leanness! my leanness!* And *many sleep* in a spiritual grave, the easy prey of corruption and sin.

How few Calebs, how few Joshuas are found among the many spies who bring a report of the good land! The cry is seldom, *Let us go up and possess it*, unless the good land be the map of the gospel drawn by Dr. Crisp. On the contrary, the difficulties attending the noble conquest are magnified to the highest degree: *The sons of Anak are tall and strong, and their cities fenced up to heaven.* "All our corruptions are gigantic, the castle where they dwell shall always remain a den of thieves; it is an impregnable citadel, strongly garrisoned by Apollyon's forces; we shall never love God here with all our souls, we shall always have *desperately wicked hearts.*"

How few of our celebrated pulpits are there, where more has not been said *at times* for sin than against it! With what an air of positiveness and assurance has that Barabbas, that murderer of Christ and souls been pleaded for! "It will humble us, make us watchful, stir up our diligence, quicken our graces, endear Christ," &c. that is in plain English, pride will beget humility, sloth will spur us on to diligence, rust will brighten our armour, and unbelief, the very soul of every sinful temper, is to do the work of faith! Sin must
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not only be always lurking about the walls and gates of the town of Man's soul (if I may once more allude to Bunyan's holy war) but it shall dwell in it, in the King's palace, *in the inner chamber*, the inmost recesses of the heart: There is no turning it out. Jesus, who cleansed the lepers with a word or a touch, cannot, with all the force of his spirit and virtue of his blood, expel this leprosy; it is too inveterate. Death, that foul monster, the offspring of Sin, shall have the important honor of killing his father. He, he alone is to give the great, the last, the decisive blow. This is confidently asserted by those who cry, Nothing but Christ! They allow him to lop off the branches; but Death, the great Saviour Death, is to destroy the root of sin. In the mean time *the temple of God shall have agreement with idols, and Christ concord with Belial: The Lamb of God shall lie down with the roaring Lion in our heart.*

Nor does the preaching of this internal slavery; this bondage of spiritual corruption, shock our hearers. No: this mixture of light and darkness passes for gospel in our days. And, what is more astonishing still, by making much ado about "*finished* salvation," we can even put it off as "the only pure, genuine and comfortable gospel." While the smoothness of our doctrine will atone for our most glaring inconsistencies.

We have so whetted the antinomian appetite of our hearers, that they swallow down almost any thing. We may tell them, St. Paul was at one and the same time *carnal, sold under sin*, crying, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* and triumphing that he *did not walk after the flesh but after the spirit, rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience*, and glorying that *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death!* This suits their experience; therefore they readily take our word, and it passes for *the word of God*. It is a mercy that we have not yet attempted to prove by the same argument, that
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lying and cursing are quite consistent with apostolic faith; for St. Paul speaks of *his lie*, and St. James says, *with our tongues curse we men*.

We may make them believe, that though adultery and murder are damning sins in poor blind Turks and Heathens, yet they are only *the spots of God's children* in enlightened Jews and favoured Christians.—That God is the most partial of all judges, some being accursed to the pit of hell for breaking the law in the most trifling points; while others, who actually break it in the most flagrant instances, are richly *blessed with all heavenly benedictions*.——And that while God beholds no iniquity in Jacob, no perverseness in Israel, he sees nothing but odious sins in Ismael, and devilish wickedness in Esau: although the Lord assures us *the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him*, and that *though band join in band the wicked shall not go unpunished*, were he as great in Jacob as Corah, and as famous as Zimri in Israel.

We may tell our hearers one hour, that “the love of Christ sweetly *constrains* all believers to walk, yea to run the way of God's commandments, and that they cannot help obeying its forcible dictates:” And we may persuade them the next hour, that “how to perform what is good they find not, that they fall continually into sin; for that which they do they allow not, and what they would that do they not; but what they hate that do they.” And that these inconsistencies may not shock their common sense, or alarm their consciences, we again touch the sweet-sounding string of *finished* salvation; we intimate we have the key of evangelical knowledge, reflect on those who expect deliverance from sin in this life, and *build up* our congregations in a most comfortable, I wish I could say, *most holy faith*.

In short, we have so used our people to strange doctrines, and preposterous assertions, that if we were to intimate, God himself sets us a pattern of antinomianism, by disregarding his own most holy and

and lovely law, which inculcates perfect love—we were even to hint that he bears a secret grudge, or an immortal enmity to those very souls whom he commands us to *love as Christ has loved us*; that he feeds them only for the great day of slaughter, and has determined (so inveterate is his hatred!) *before the foundation of the world*, to fit them as *vessels of wrath*, that he might eternally fill them with his fiery vengeance, merely to shew what a great and sovereign God he is; I doubt not whether some would not be highly pleased and say, we had “preached a sound and sweet discourse.” This would probably be the case if we addressed them in such a manner as to make them believe they are *elect*: not indeed of those ancient, legal, and wrestling *elect who cry to God day and night to be avenged of their spiritual adversary*; but of these modern, indolent elect, who have found out a short way to heaven, and maintain, “we are absolutely to do nothing in order to salvation.”

With joy I confess however, that glorious and rousing truths are frequently delivered in the demonstration of the spirit and of power. But alas! the blow is seldom followed. You have seen fond mothers violently correcting their children one instant, and the next dandling them upon their knees; and by foolishly kissing away their tears, spoiling the correction they had given. Just so it is with several of us: We preach a close discourse, and seem determined to drive the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Our antinomian hearers begin to awake and look about them: Some are even ready to cry out, *Men and brethren what shall we do?* But alas! we found a retreat when we should shout for a second battle: By an unaccountable weakness, before we conclude, we sooth them up, and make a way for their escape; or, which is not much better, the next time we preach, by setting up Dr. Crisp’s doctrine as much as ever, we industriously repair the breach we had made in the antinomian Babel.

And

And suppose some of us preach against Antinomianism, is not our practice contrary to our preaching? We are under a dangerous mistake, if we think ourselves clear from antinomianism, merely because we thunder against antinomian principles: For as some, who zealously maintain such principles, by the happiest inconsistency in the world, pay nevertheless in their practice a proper regard to the law they revile; so not a few, who profess the deepest respect for it, are so unhappily inconsistent, as to transgress it without ceremony. The God of holiness says, *Go and work in my vineyard.* The inconsistent Antinomian answers, "I will not be bound by any *Law*: I scorn the ties of *Duty*:" but nevertheless *he repents and goes.* The inconsistent legalist replies, "It is my bounden *duty* to obey, *I go Lord*;" nevertheless *he does not go.* Which of the two is the greater antinomian? The latter no doubt: his practical antinomianism is much more odious to God and man, than the speculative error of the former.

The Lord God help us to avoid both! Whether the hellish wolf come barefaced, or in *sheep's cloathing*; or what is a still more dangerous disguise, in *LAMB's cloathing*; in the clothes of the shepherd, covered from head to foot with a righteousness which he has *imputed* to himself, and sing the Syren song of *finished* salvation.

IV.

I shall close these reflexions upon the antinomianism of preachers by presenting you with sketches of two very opposite ways of preaching. The first is an extract from Bishop Hopkins's 2^d sermon, intitled *Practical Christianity*; upon those words of St. Paul, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, &c.* This testimony will weigh so much

much the more with you as he was a *sound Calvinist*, and a truly converted man.

' To *work out our Salvation*, says the godly prelate, is to persevere in the ways of obedience, until, through them, that salvation that is begun here on earth be perfected in heaven. This *work* implies three things. (1.) Pains and labour. *Salvation* is that which must be wrought out; it is that which will make the soul pant and breathe, yea run down with sweat to obtain it. (2.) It implies constancy and diligence. A Christian that would *work out his salvation*, must be always employed about it. It is a web, into which we must weave the whole thread of our lives. That man who works at salvation only by some passionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul apostacy, and notorious sins, will never *work salvation out*. (3.) It promises success; though it be hard work, it shall not be long work; continue working, it shall be wrought out; what before was your work, shall be your reward; and this salvation that was so painful in working, shall be most blessed in the enjoyment.

' Say not, " We have no strength to work with." What God commands us to do, he will assist us in doing. We are impotent, but God is omnipotent: *Work* therefore, for this omnipotent God *works in you both to will and to do*.

' The proposition I shall lay down from the text is this: *That it is the Duty of every true Christian to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling: Or, that every Christian may every man, ought to work for his living, even for an eternal life*. To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the Bible. We can no where open this blessed book, but we find this truth proved to us, either directly or by consequence. And yet it is strange in these days to see how dubiously some men, who would be thought admirers of *free grace*, speak of obedience and working,

as

' as if they were the badge of a *legal spirit*,
 ' Oh it is a soft and easy doctrine to bid men sit
 ' still and believe, as if God would translate them
 ' to heaven upon their couches. Is it possible that
 ' these notions should be dispersed and entertained
 ' but because it has always been the Devil's policy
 ' to vent those doctrines that indulge the flesh
 ' under the patronage of *free grace* and *gospel*
 ' *attainments* ?

' Wherefore is it that we are commanded to
 ' *strive that we may enter in at the strait gate* ? So
 ' *to run that we may obtain* ? So to *wrestle* that we
 ' *may be able to stand* ? So to *fight* that we may
 ' *lay hold on eternal life* ? Can you *strive* and *run*,
 ' and *wrestle* and *fight*, and all this by doing no-
 ' thing ?—If God would save you without work-
 ' ing, why has he given you grace, an operative
 ' principle, that you might work ? He might as
 ' well save you without grace, as without works :
 ' for that is not grace that does not put forth itself
 ' in working. God, rather than we shall not
 ' work, will set us at work. He gives and pro-
 ' mises assistance only that we might work out our
 ' own salvation. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to*
 ' *think any thing* : What then ? Must we therefore sit
 ' still ? No, says the apostle, for God who finds us
 ' employment, will also find us strength : *Our suf-*
 ' *ficiency is of God*.

' Wherefore is it that men *are* justly damned ?
 ' Is it not because they will not do what they are
 ' able to do ? And whence have they this ability ?
 ' Is it not from the grace of God's spirit ?—What
 ' is it that men expect ? Must God drive them to
 ' heaven by force and violence whether they will
 ' or no ?

' If man will, he may work out his salvation. I
 ' speak not this to assert the power of man to work
 ' out salvation, without the aid of special grace to
 ' incline his will. Where there is special grace
 ' given to make the will willing to convert, there
 ' is nothing more required to make him able, be-

H

' cause

* cause conversion chiefly consists in the act of the
 * will itself, only to make him willing is required.
 * special grace ; which they that favour the undue
 * liberty of the will do deny. Our impotency lies in
 * the stubbornness of our wills. The greatest sin-
 * ner may work out his own salvation if he will. If
 * he is but willing, he has that already that may make
 * him able. God puts no new powers in the soul
 * when he converts it!

* Are there any so desperately profane as not
 * to have prayed unto God in their whole life.
 * Why now to what end have you prayed ? Was it
 * not for salvation ? And did you work for salva-
 * tion, and at the same time believe you could not
 * work ? Thou art inexcusable O man, whoever
 * thou art that wilt not work ; it is in vain to plead
 * thou wantest power. God will confute thee out
 * of thy own mouth.'

* Would a master when he commands his servant
 * to work, take this as a sufficient excuse for his
 * sloth and idleness, that he has no power to work
 * till God acts and moves him ? Why this is a
 * truth, and it may as well be objected by your
 * servants to you, as by you unto God. Though
 * it is impossible that men should stir without God's
 * concurrence, yet this hinders not their endea-
 * vours, no, nor is it any matter of discouragement
 * to them. They put these things to the trial.
 * Now why should we not do so in spirituals as
 * well as in temporals ? Are they not of great-
 * er concernment ? It is not inability but wil-
 * ful sloth that destroys men. Sinners, wherefore
 * will you perish ? Why will you sleep away your
 * souls into hell ? Is it more painful for you to
 * work than to be damned ? Endeavour therefore to
 * do what you can ; labour and sweat at salvation's
 * work, rather than fail of it for a wilful neglect.
 * *How shall you escape if you neglect so great sal-
 * vation ?*

* *Obj.* Thus to press men to working is deroga-
 * tory to Christ's merits, by which alone we are
 * saved,

' saved, and not by our works. Christ has done all
 ' for us, and wrought out our salvation by himself.
 ' Shall we piece out his work by our obedience;
 ' when all we have now to do is to believe on
 ' him?

' *Ans.* There is the sweetest harmony between
 ' the merits of Christ, and our *working out of our*
 ' *salvation*. To make it evident, I shall shew what
 ' Christ has done for us, and what he expects we
 ' shall do for ourselves. He has merited grace, and
 ' purchased eternal happiness. And why did
 ' Christ merit grace? Was it not that we might
 ' act it in obedience? If he merited grace that we
 ' might obey, is it sense to object that our obe-
 ' dience is derogatory to his merit? If one end of
 ' his doing all that he did for us, was to enable us
 ' to do for ourselves; will any man say, now I am
 ' bound to do nothing, because Christ has done all?
 ' How lost are such men both to reason and religion,
 ' who undertake so to argue? No, Salvation was
 ' purchased and Grace procured, that by the act-
 ' ing and exercise of that grace, we might attain
 ' to that salvation. It is not by way of merit or
 ' purchase that we exhort men to work out their
 ' salvation. Those are guilty of practical blas-
 ' phemy against the Priestly Office of Christ, who
 ' think to merit it by their own works.

' As Christ has done two things for us, so he
 ' requires two things from us. (1.) That we
 ' should put forth all the strength of nature in la-
 ' bouring after grace: and, (2.) That we should
 ' put forth the power of grace in labouring for the
 ' salvation purchased for us. (1.) Let every sin-
 ' ner know it is his work to repent and return,
 ' that he may live. You cannot sit down and say,
 ' what need is there of my working? Christ has
 ' already done all my work for me to my hands.
 ' No, Christ has done his own work, the work of
 ' a *Saviour* and a *Surety*; but he never did the
 ' work of a *sinner*.

‘ If Christ by *meriting* grace had bestowed it upon thee, and wrought it in thee, then indeed no more would be required of thee to become holy, but to cast back a lazy look at the purchase of Jesus Christ: Then thy sloth would have some pretence not to labour. But this will not do. Our Saviour commands all men *To seek first the kingdom of God*, and the Apostle exhorts Simon Magus to *pray*. Do not therefore cheat your own souls into perdition by lazy notions about Christ’s merits. If you sit still expecting till the meriting grace of Christ drop down into your souls, and change your hearts; truly it may be before that time you yourselves may drop down into hell, with your old unchanged hearts.

‘ (2.) Christ expects that those who have grace, should put forth the utmost power thereof in labouring after the salvation he has purchased for them. He has merited salvation for them, but it is to be obtained by their own labour and industry. Is not what Christ has done sufficient? Must he *repent, believe, and obey* for them? This is not to make him a Saviour but a drudge. He has done what was fit for a *mediator* to do. He now requires of us what is meet for *sinners* to do; that is, to *repent, &c.* He now bids you *wash and be clean*. Would you have the great Prophet come and strike off your leprosy, and do nothing towards the cure? The way to heaven is made possible, but if you do not walk in the way that leads to it, you may still be as far from heaven as ever. Though Christ’s bearing the punishment of the law by death does exempt us from suffering, yet his obeying of the law does not excuse our obedience to the law. Nor is our obedience derogatory to Christ’s, because it proceeds from other grounds than Christ’s did. He obeyed the law as a covenant of works, we only as a rule of righteousness.

‘ To

To conclude upon this point, So work with that earnestness, constancy and unweariness in well doing, as if thy works alone were able to justify and save thee: And so absolutely depend and rely upon the alone merits of Christ for justification and salvation, as if thou never hadst performed one act of obedience in all thy life. This is the right gospel-frame of obedience, so to work as if we were only to be saved by our own merits; and withal so to rest on the merits of Christ, as if we had never wrought any thing. It is a difficult thing to give to each of these its due in our practice: When we work we are too apt to neglect Christ; and when we rely on Christ, we are too apt to neglect working: But that Christian has got the right art of obedience who can mingle these two together; who can with one hand *work the works of God*, and yet at the same time lay fast hold of the merits of Jesus Christ. Let this antinomian principle be forever rooted out of the minds of men, that our working is derogatory to Christ's work. Never more think he has done all your work for you, but labour for that salvation which he has purchased and merited. Could ever such senseless objections prevail with men who have seriously read this Scripture? *He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* But truly when sloth and ignorance meet together, if you tell men what powers their natures, assisted by preventing grace, have to work, and how necessary obedience is to salvation, they with the sluggish fold their arms in their bosom doing nothing; telling us these doctrines are *Arminianism* and flat *Popery*. But deceive not yourselves; whether this doctrine takes hold on your judgments now I know not; but this I know assuredly, it shall take hold of your consciences either here or hereafter; and then it will not suffice you to say

H. 3

either

‘ either that you had no power to do any thing, or
 ‘ that Christ has already done all for you.’

This excellent discourse should be in all the houses of professors. It would shame the careless Remonstrants, and shew them how orthodox some Calvinists are in point of works; and it would confound the slothful Calvinists, and make them see how they have left *Practical Christianity* for *Antinomian Crispianity*. For East cannot be farther from West, than the preceding extract of Bishop Hopkins’s sermon is from the following propositions, extracted from Dr. Crisp’s works, which some make the standard of evangelical preaching. (They are refuted also in *Gospel truth vindicated by Mr. Williams*, whose excellent refutation is recommended by 53 Calvinist divines of the last century. And Mr. Wesley’s Propositions in the Minutes of the Conference held in 1770, may be looked upon as the ground on which that refutation stands.)

‘ Must not a believer, an elect, be reckoned to
 ‘ be a sinner while he does sin? No. Though he
 ‘ does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned as a sinner,
 ‘ his sins are reckoned to be taken away from
 ‘ him.—A man does sin against God; God
 ‘ reckons not his sin to be his; he reckons it
 ‘ Christ’s, therefore he cannot reckon it his.—
 ‘ There is no condition in the covenant of Grace :
 ‘ man has no tie upon him to perform any thing
 ‘ whatsoever; as a condition that must be observed
 ‘ on his part; and there is not one bond or obligation
 ‘ upon man to the fulfilling of his part of
 ‘ the covenant, or partaking of the benefits of
 ‘ it.—There is no better way to know your
 ‘ portion in Christ, than upon the general tender of
 ‘ the Gospel to conclude absolutely he is yours :
 ‘ say, “ my part is as good as any man’s :” Set
 ‘ down thy rest here; question it not, but believe
 ‘ it.—Christ belongs to sinners as sinners;
 ‘ and if there be no worse than sinfulness, rebellion
 ‘ and enmity in thee, he belongs to thee, as
 ‘ well

' well as to any in the world.—Christ does just
 ' tify a person before he believes; we do not be-
 ' lieve that we may be justified, but because we are
 ' justified. The elect are justified from eternity;
 ' at Christ's death; and the latest time is before
 ' they are born.—It is a received conceit among
 ' persons, that our obedience is the way to heaven;
 ' and though it be not, say they, the cause of our
 ' reign, yet it is the way to the kingdom: but I
 ' must tell you, all this sanctification of life is not
 ' a jot the way of that justified person to heaven.—
 ' To what purpose do we propose to ourselves the
 ' gaining of that by our labour and industry, that
 ' is already become ours before we do one jot?—
 ' Must they now labour to gain these things, as if
 ' it were referred to their well or evil walking;
 ' that as they shall walk so they shall speed: The
 ' Lord does nothing in his people upon conditions.
 ' The Lord intends not that by our obedience we
 ' shall gain something which in case of our failing
 ' we shall miscarry of.—While you labour to get
 ' by duties, you provoke God as much as in your
 ' lies.—We must work from life and not for
 ' life.—There is nothing you can do from whence
 ' you ought to expect any gain to yourselves.—
 ' Love to the brethren, universal obedience, and
 ' all other inherent qualifications are no signs by
 ' which we should judge of our state.—Every
 ' elect vessel, from the first instant of his being, is
 ' as pure in the eyes of God from the charge of
 ' sin, as he shall be in glory.—Though such
 ' persons do act rebellion, yet the loathsomeness
 ' and hatefulnes of this rebellion is laid on the
 ' back of Christ; he bears the sin, as well as the
 ' blame, and shame: And God can dwell with
 ' persons that act the thing, because all the filthi-
 ' ness of it is translated from them upon the back
 ' of Christ.—It is the voice of a lying spirit in
 ' your hearts that says, you that are believers (as
 ' David) have yet sin wasting your conscience.
 ' David indeed says, *my sins are gone over my head,*
 ' but

• but he speaks here from himself, and all that he
 • speaks from himself was not truth.—There is
 • as much ground to be confident of the pardon of
 • sin to a believer, as soon as he committed it,
 • as to believe it after he has performed all the
 • humiliation in the world: A believer may be
 • assured of pardon as soon as he commits any sin,
 • even adultery and murder.—There is not one fit
 • of sadness in a believer but he is out of the way
 • of Christ.—God does no longer stand displeased
 • though a believer do sin often.—There is no sin
 • that ever believers commit, that can possibly do
 • them any hurt. Therefore, as their sins cannot
 • hurt them, so there is no cause of fear in their sins
 • committed.—Sins are but scare-crows and bug-
 • bears to fright ignorant children, but men of
 • understanding see they are counterfeit things.—
 • Sin is dead, and there is no more terror in it than
 • in a dead lion.—If we tell believers except they
 • walk thus and thus holily, and do these and these
 • good works, God will be angry with them, we
 • abuse the scriptures, undo what Christ has done,
 • injure believers, and tell God lies to his face.—
 • All our righteousness is filthy, full of menstu-
 • rousness, the highest kind of filthiness—even what
 • is the spirit's, must be involved within that which
 • is a man's own, under the general notion of
 • *dung*.—God has done every thing in Christ, and
 • taken away all things that can disturb our peace;
 • but man will be mincing the truth, and tell you
 • that if you keep close to God, and refrain from
 • sin, God will love you.—Christ does all his work
 • for him as well as in him that believes.—If per-
 • sons are not united to Christ, and do not partake
 • of justification before they do believe, there will be
 • bringing to life again the covenant of works; you
 • must of necessity press upon yourselves these terms,
 • “I must do, that I may have life in Christ: I must
 • believe.” Now if there be believing first, then
 • *there is doing before living.*—To what purpose
 • do

‘ do we tell men of wrath and damnation? We had as good hold our tongues.’ &c. &c.

‘ I do observe, says my judicious Calvinist author, the pretence for these opinions is, that they exalt *Christ* and *free grace*. Under this shadow Antinomianism set up in Germany. This was the great cry in England above fifty years since. The Synod of New England expose this as one of the speeches of them whom they call Antinomians: *Here is a great stir about graces and looking to hearts; but give me Christ: I seek not for graces, but for Christ: I seek not for promises, but for Christ: I seek not for sanctification, but for Christ: Tell me not of meditation and duties, but tell me of Christ.* Dr. Crisp very often bears upon this point, as if all he said was to advance *Christ and Grace.*’

You will perhaps say that our gospel-ministers are far more guarded than the good Doctor. But I would ask whether all his scheme is not collected, and made to center in the one fashionable expression of **FINISHED SALVATION**? Which seems to be our *Shibboleth*.

If the *salvation* of the elect was *finished* upon the cross, then was their *justification* finished, their *sanctification* finished, their *glorification* finished: for justification, sanctification, and glorification *finished*, are but the various parts of our *finished salvation*. If our justification is *finished*, there is no need of believing in order to be justified. If our sanctification is *finished*, there is no need of mortifying one sin, praying for one grace, taking up one cross, parting with either right eye or right hand, in order to perfect holiness. Again,

Suppose our salvation is *finished*, it follows Christ has done all, and we are to do nothing. Obedience and good works are no more necessary in order to it, than cutting and carrying stones are necessary to the completing of Westminster bridge. We are as perfect in Christ, as completely blameless and holy in the midst of all our sins, as ever we shall

shall be in glory. In a word, if salvation is *finished*, well ordered in all things and sure, our sins cannot take any thing from it, nor our righteousness have any thing to do with it. The little flock of the elect shall be saved, nay are fully saved now, do what they please; and the multitudes of the reprobates shall be damned, do what they can. Give me only the smooth ring of *finished salvation*, and without offering the least violence to common sense, I shall necessarily draw every link of Dr. Crisp's antinomian chain.

I have often wondered, how so many excellent men can be so fond of an expression which is the stalking-horse of every wild ranter. Is it scriptural? Which of the Prophets or Apostles ever used it on earth? Do even *the Spirits of just men made perfect* ascribe *finished* salvation to the Lamb? If they did, would not their uncollected dust, and the souls *crying under the altar*, prove their praises premature? Will salvation be *finished* till *the last enemy, death*, is fully overcome by the general resurrection? Again,

Is the expression of *finished Salvation* consistent with the analogy of faith? Does it not supersede our Lord's *intercession at the right hand of God*? Whether he intercedes for the reprobate or the elect, acts he not a most unwise part? Is not he giving himself a needless trouble, whether he intercedes for the *justification* of those whom he has himself *reprobated*, or for the salvation of those whose salvation is *finished*? Is it right to offer an insult to our High-Priest upon his mediatorial throne, under pretence of honouring him on the cross? And may not I say with judicious Baxter, *See what this overdoing tends to!* See what contempt it pours upon Him who is *the Brightness of his Father's glory!*

If that favourite expression is neither scriptural, nor agreeable to the analogy of faith, is it at least *rational*? I doubt it is not. *Finished* salvation implies both a deliverance from bodily and spiritual evils, and a being made fully partaker of heavenly glory.

glory, in body and in soul. But waving the consideration of glory and heaven, and taking the word *salvation* in its negative and lower sense, I ask: Can it be said with any propriety that *bodily* salvation is *finished*, while innumerable pains and diseases surround us, to drag us to the grave, and deliver us to putrefaction? And is *spiritual* salvation finished? Is *the body of sin destroyed*? Do not those very Ministers who preach *finished salvation* with one breath, tell us with the next, "there is *no* deliverance (that is, *no* finished salvation) from sin in this life?"

And what end does that expression answer? I know of none but that of spreading Dr. Crisp's doctrine, and making thousands of deluded souls talk as if the *tower* of their salvation was *finished*, when they have not so much as *counted the cost*; or when they have just laid the foundation.

Therefore, with all due deference to my Brethren and Fathers who preach *finished salvation*, I ask, Would it not be better to drop that doctrine, with all the other dangerous refinements of the honest Doctor, and preach a *finished atonement*, a *present sovereign remedy*, completely prepared to heal all our spiritual infirmities, assuage all our miseries, and fit us for *finished salvation* in glory? Would not this be as well at least, as to help our patients to compose themselves to sleep upon the pillow of Antinomianism; by making them believe the preparation of the remedy, and a complete cure are all one; so that now they have absolutely nothing to do in order to saving health, and (as the Apostles concluded about Lazarus) if they *sleep* they *shall do well*? And should we not, even in speaking of *Redemption*, imitate the judicious Calvinists of the last century, who carefully distinguished between redemption by the *price* of Jesus's blood, and redemption by the *power* of his Spirit. "The former, said they, was finished upon the cross, but the latter is not so much as begun in thousands;

sands; even in all that are unborn or unconverted?

V.

To speak the melancholy truth, how few individuals are free from practical Antinomianism? Setting aside their attendance on the ministry of the word, where is the material difference between several of our genteel believers and other people? Do not we see the sumptuous furniture in their apartments, and fashionable elegance in their dress? What sums of money do they frequently lay out in costly superfluities to adorn their persons, houses and gardens?

Wise heathens, by the help of a little philosophy, saw the impropriety of having any useless, brittle vessels about them: they broke them on purpose, that they might be consistent with the profession they made of *seeking wisdom*. But we, who profess to have *found Christ the wisdom of God*, purchase such vessels and toys at an high rate, and instead of hiding them for shame, as Rachel did her Teraphim for fear, we *write our motto over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall*, and any man that fears the God of Daniel may, upon studying the Chinese characters, make out ANTI-NOMIANISM.

Our Lord, whose garment does not appear to have been cut in the height of the fashion as it was made without seam, informs us that they who wear *soft clothing*, and splendid apparel, *are in king's houses*. But had he lived in our days, he might have found them in God's houses; in our fashionable churches or chapels. There you may find people professing to believe the Bible, who so conform to this present world as to wear gold, pearls and precious

precious stones, when no distinction of office or state obliges them to it; in direct opposition to the words of two Apostles: *Let not their adorning be*, says St. Peter, *that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.—Let them adorn themselves in modest apparel*, adds St. Paul, *not with curled hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array*.

Multitudes of professors, far from being convinced of their sin in this respect, ridicule Mr. W. for bearing his testimony against it. The opposition he dares make to that growing branch of vanity, affords matter of pious mirth to a thousand antinomians. Isaiah could openly reprove the *haughty daughters of Zion*, who *walked with stretched forth necks, wanton eyes, and tinkling feet*: he could expose *the bravery of their fashionable ornaments, their round tires like the moon, their chains, bracelets, headbands, rings, and ear-rings*: but some of our humble Christian ladies will not bear a reproof from Mr. W. on the head of dress. They even laugh at him, as a *pitiful legalist*; and yet, O the inconsistency of the antinomian spirit! They call Isaiah the *evangelical Prophet*!

Finery is often attended with an expensive table, at least with such delicacies as our purse can reach. St. Paul *kept his body under*, and was *in fastings often*; and our Lord gives us directions about the proper manner of *fasting*. But the Apostle did not *know* the easy way to heaven taught by Dr. Crisp; and our Lord did not *approve* of it, or he would have saved himself the trouble of his directions. In general we look upon fasting much, as we do upon penitential flagellation. Both equally raise our pity: we leave them both to popish devotees. Some of our good old church-people will yet fast on Good-Friday; but our fashionable believers begin to cast away that last scrap of self-denial. Their faith, which should produce, animate and regulate works of mortification, goes a shorter way to work; it explodes them all.

" But perhaps we wrestle not with flesh and blood, because we are entirely taken up with wrestling against Principalities, Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high places."

Alas! I fear this is not the case. Few of us know what it is to *cry out of the deep*, to pray and believe, till in the name of Jesus we force our way beyond flesh and blood, come within the reach of the internal world, conflict in an agony with the powers of darkness, vanquish Apollyon in all his attacks, and continue wrestling till the day of eternity break upon us, and the God of Jacob bless us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. John Bunyan's pilgrim, the old Puritans, and the first Quakers had such engagements, and gained such victories; but they soon got over the edge of internal activity into the smooth easy path of Laodicean formality: Most of us called Methodists have already followed them; and when we are in that snare, Satan scorns to conflict with us; puny flesh and blood are more than a match for us. We fall asleep under their bewitching power, and begin to dream strange dreams: " Our salvation is finished, we have got above legality, we live without frames and feelings, we have attained Christian liberty, we are perfect in Christ, we have nothing to do, our covenant is sure," &c. True! But unhappily it is a covenant with the flesh: Satan, who is too wise to break it by rousing us in the spirit, leaves us to our delusions; and we think ourselves in the kingdom of God, when we are only in a fool's paradise.

At midnight I will rise and praise thee, said once a pious Jew; but we pious Christians, who enjoy both health and strength, are imprisoned within our bed-curtains, long after the sun has called the diligent to their labour. When the fear of the Lord was in us the beginning of wisdom, we durst not *so* confer with flesh and blood. We had then a little faith; and so far as it went, it shewed itself by our works. Then we could without hesitation, and

from our hearts, pray, Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the Wills of thy faithful people; that they plenteously bringing forth the Fruit of good Works, may by Thee be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Collect for the last Sunday in Trinity.) We believed there was some truth in those words of our Lord: *Except a man forsake all that he hath, deny himself, and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple. He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake shall find it. If thine eye offend thee pluck it out: It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for I say unto you that many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able; because they will seek to enter in at the wide, rather than the strait gate; the antinomian or pharisaic, rather than the evangelically legal gate of salvation.* But now, "We know better, say some of us, we have got over our scruples and legality." We can *conform to this present world*; cleave to, instead of *forsaking all we have*, and even grasp what we have not. What a strange way this of *growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ crucified!*

Daniel informs us that he *made his petition three times*, and David that he offered up his *praises seven times a day*. Once also like them we had fixed hours for private prayer and self-examination, for reading the scriptures and meditating upon them, perhaps upon our knees; but we thought this was legality too, and under the specious pretence of going beyond forms, and learning to *pray always*, we first threw away our form, and soon after our endeavours to watch unto prayer: Now we scarce ever, for any length of time, solemnly bend the knee before *our Father who sees in secret*. And instead of leaning on Christ's bosom in all the means of grace, we take our graceless rest on the bosom of that painted Jezebel, *Formality*.

If we are backward in performing that leading work of PIETY, *secret prayer*; Is it a wonder if in
1 2
general

general we are averse to every work of MERCY, that costs us something, besides a little of our superfluous money? And would to God some did not even grudge this, when it is pressed out of their purse, by the importunate addresses of those who beg for the poor! However we give yet at the door of a church, or at the communion, whether with indifference or joy, whether out of custom, shame, or love, we seldom examine. But that important branch of St. James, *pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father*, which consists in *visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions*, is with many almost as much out of date, as a pilgrimage to our Lady of Loretto.

O ye forsaken sons of poverty, and ancient daughters of sorrow, who pine away in your desolate garrets or cellars, without fire in winter, destitute of food, physic, or nurse in sickness; raise a moment your emaciated bodies wrapt up in thread-bare blankets, if you are possessed of any such a covering; and tell me, tell the world how many of our gay professors of Religion have sought and found you out in your deplorable circumstances! How many are come to visit, in you, and worship with you, *the man of sorrow*; who once lay on the cold ground in a bloody sweat? When did they make your bed in your sickness? When have they kindly inquired into all your wants, sympathized in all your temptations, supported your drooping heads in a fainting fit, revived your sinking spirits with suitable cordials, gently wiped your cold sweats, or mixed them with their tears of pity?

Alas! You sometimes find more compassion and assistance in your extremity, from those who never *name the name of Christ*, than from our easy Antinomian Laodicean *Believers*. Their wants are richly supplied; that is enough: they do not inquire into yours, and *you* are ashamed or afraid to trouble them with the dismal story. Nor indeed would some of them understand you if you did. *Their uninterrupted abundance makes them as incapable*

pable of feeling for you, as the warm inhabitants of Ethiopia are to feel for the frozen Icelanders.

While the table of some Believer (so called) is alternately loaded with a variety of delicate meats, and rich wines, what have *ye* to sustain sinking nature? Alas! One can soon see your all of food and physic. A pitcher of water stands by your bed-side upon a stool, the only piece of furniture left in your wretched apartment. The Lord God bless the poor widow that brought it you, with her *two mites*! Heaven reward a thousand-fold the loving creature that not only shares with you, but freely bestows upon you *all her living, even all that she has*; when *they* forget to inquire after you, and to send you something out of their luxurious abundance! *The Son of Man, once forsaken by all the disciples, and comforted by an angel, make her bed in the time of sickness!* And a waiting band of celestial Spirits carry her charitable soul into Lazarus's *bosom* in the awful hour of dissolution! I had rather be in her case, though she should not confidently profess the faith, than in *yours*, O ye carested Believers, who let your affluence overflow to those that have more need to learn frugality in the school of scarceness, than to receive bounties which feed their sensuality and indulge their pride.

And ye women professing godliness, who enjoy the comforts of health and abundance, in whose *streets there is no complaining, no decay, whose daughters are as the polished corners of the temple*; when did you ever want visitors? Alas! Ye have too many for the good they do you, or that you do them. Does not your conversation, which begins with the love of Jesus, terminate in religious scandal; as naturally as your soul, which once *began in the spirit, ends now in the flesh*? O that your visitors were as ready to attend workhouses, jails, infirmaries and hospitals, as they are to wait upon you! O that at least, like the Dorcases, the Phebes, and Priscillas of old, you would teach them cheerfully to work for the poor, to be the free servants of the Church,

and tender nurses of the sick ! O that they saw in you all, how the holy women, the *widows who were widows indeed*, formerly entertained strangers, *washed the saints' feet*, instructed the younger women, and continued night and day in prayer ! But alas ! *The love of many*, once warm, as the *smoking flax*, is waxed cold instead of taking fire and flaming : They who once began to *seek the profit of many*, now *seek their own ease*, or interest ; *their own honor*, or indulgence.

Almost all, when they come to the foot of the hill Difficulty, take their leave of Jesus as a guide, because he leads on through spiritual death to the regeneration. Some disliking that *door*, like *thieves and robbers* climb up an easier way. And others leaving the high way of the cross, under the fair pretence that blind Papists walk therein, make for themselves and others broad and downward roads, to ascend the steep hill of Zion.

Those easy paths are innumerable, like the people that walk in them. O that *my eyes*, like David's, did *run down like water*, because men professing godliness keep not God's law, and are even offended at it ! *Their mouth talketh of vanity*, they *dissemble with their double heart*, and *their right hand is a right hand of sloth, or positive iniquity*. O that I had the tenderness of St. Paul, to tell you even weeping of *those who mind earthly things* ; *those who have sinned and have not repented* ; *those who*, while they boast they are made free by the Son of God, are brought under the power of many things ; whom foolish desires, absurd fears, undue attachments, imported superfluities, and disagreeable habits, keep in the most ridiculous bondage !

O that *my head were waters*, and *my eyes fountains of tears*, to deplore with Jeremiah the *slain of the daughter of God's people* ; who live in pleasure and are dead while they live ! And to lament over spiritual Pharisees of every sort ; those who say *Stand by, I am holier than thou* ; and those who fix the names of *poor creature ! blind ! and carnal !* upon every publican

publican they see in the temple; and boldly placing themselves among the *elect*, thank God *they are not as other men*, and in particular as the *reprobates*!

Who can number the *adulterers and adulteresses*; who know not that the *friendship of the world is enmity against God*! The concealed idolaters, who have their *chambers of imagery* within, and *set up their idols in their hearts*! The envious Cains, who carry murder in their breast! The profane Esaus, who give up their birth-right for a sensual gratification; and covetous Judases, who *sell the truth* which they should *buy*, and part with Christ for *filthy lucre's sake*! The *sons of God*, who look at the *fair daughters of men*, and take to themselves *wives of all which they chuse*! The gay Dinahs who *visit the daughters of the land*, and come home polluted in body or in soul: The filthy Onans, who *defile the temple of God*: The *Prophets of Bethel*, who *deceive the Prophets of Judah*, intice them out of the way of self-denial, and bring the roaring lion and death upon them! The fickle Marcuses, who *depart* when they should *go to the work*! The self-made Prophets, who *run before they are sent*, and scatter instead of *profiting the people*! The spiritual Abfaloms, who rise against their Fathers in the gospel; and in order to *reign without them*, raise a rebellion against them! The furious Zedekiahs, who *make themselves horns of iron to push* the true servants of the Lord, because they will not *prophecy smooth things*, and *deceit*, as they do!

Who can count the fretful Jonahs, who are *angry to death* when the *worm* of disappointment *smites the gourd* of their creature-happiness? The weak Aarons who dare not resist a multitude, and are carried by the stream into the greatest absurdities? The jealous Miriams, who rise against the ministers that God honours? The crafty Zibas, who calumniate and supplant their brethren? The treacherous Joabs, who *kiss* them, to get an opportunity of *stabbing them under the fifth rib*? The busy
Sons

Sons of Zeruiah, who perpetually stir up resentment and wrath? The mischievous Doegs, who carry about poisonous scandal, and blow up the fire of discord? The hypocritical Gehazis, who look like saints before their masters and ministers, and yet can impudently lie, and impiously cheat? The Gibeonites, always busy in hewing wood and drawing water, in going through the drudgery of outward services, without ever aspiring at the adoption of sons? The halting Naamans, who serve the Lord and bow to Rimmon: The backsliding Solomons, who once *chose wisdom*, but now pursue folly in her most extravagant and impious forms? The apostatizing Alexanders, who *tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing*? And, to include multitudes in one class, the Samaritans, who, by a common mixture of truth and error, of heavenly and earthly mindedness, *worship the Lord and serve their gods*; are one day for God, and the next for Mammon: Or the thousands in Israel who *halt between two opinions*, crying out when Elijah prevails, *The Lord He is the God!* and when Jezebel triumphs, returning to the old song, “*O Baal save us! O Trinity of the world, Money, Pleasure and Honor, make us happy!*”

VI.

Time would fail to describe the innumerable branches of *Antinomianism*, with all the fruits they bear. It may be compared to the astonishing tree, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his mysterious dream: *A strong tree, set in the midst of the Church; the height thereof reaches unto heaven, and the sight thereof unto the ends of the earth. Its leaves are fair, and its fruit much. Thousands sleep under its fatal shadow, and myriads feed upon its pernicious fruit.*

At

At a distance it looks like *the tree of life planted in the midst of Paradise*; but it only proves *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*. *The Woman* (the Antinomian Church) *is deceived* by the appearance. *She sees that it is good for food, pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise*: *She eats to the full, and flushed with fond hopes of heaven, nay fancying herself as God, she presents of the poisonous fruit that intoxicates her to the nobler part of the Church, the obedient members of the second Adam.*

O ye sons of God and daughters of Abraham, who, in compliance with the insinuations of this deceived Eve, have already stretched forth your hands to receive her fatal present, instantly draw them back, for *eternal death is in the fruit*. Fly from the tree on which she banquets, to the tree of *life*, the despised cross of Jesus; and there feed on *Him crucified*, till you are *crucified with him*; till *the body of sin is destroyed*, and you feel eternal life abundantly circulating through all your sanctified powers.

And ye uncorrupted, self-denying followers of Jesus, whom love and duty still compel to bear your cross after him, join to pray that *the Watcher* and his *holy Ones* may come down from heaven, and cry aloud, *Hew down the tree of Antinomianism; cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, scatter its fruit, and let not even the stump of its roots be left in the earth.* Your prayer is heard,

He comes! he comes! the Judge severe!
The seventh trumpet speaks him near.

Behold he appears in his glory, with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all. The thrones are cast down; the Ancient of days doth sit, whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issues, and comes forth from before him: Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand
Rane

Stand before him. The trumpet sounds : The sea gives up the dead which are in it, death and hades deliver up the dead which are in them. The just are separated from the unjust ; and while the earth and the heaven flee away from the face of him that sits on the great resplendent throne, and there is found no place for them ; the judgment so set, the books are opened, and the dead, small and great, are judged, every one according to their works.

Fear not, Ye Righteous. Ye are in the hand of the Lord, and there shall no torment touch you. In the sight of the unwise ye seemed to die, they laughed at your dying daily : but ye are in peace, and your joy is full of immortality. Having been a little chastised, you shall be greatly rewarded ; for God proved you and found you worthy for himself. And now that the time of your visitation is come, judge the nations, and reign with your Lord for ever ; for such as are faithful in love shall abide with him ; grace and mercy are to his saints, and he careth for his elect : He sets his sheep on his right hand, and stretching it towards them with ravishing looks of benignity and love, he finally justifies by works, those whom he had freely justified by faith. How sublime and solemn is the sentence !

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in ; naked and ye clothed me : I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison and ye came to me.——And do not ask with astonishment when you gave me all these tokens of your love ; for whatever you did out of regard to me, my law, and my people, you did it in my name ; and whatever you did in my name to the least of my creatures, and in particular to the least of these my brethren, you did it

of me.

As if he said, “ Think not I am biased by self partiality. No ; I am the Author of eternal salvation to them that obeyed me, and made a right use

use of my *sanctifying blood*. Such are the *blessed of my Father*; and such are *ye*. Your *faith unfeigned* produced *unfeigned love*: You *loved not in word only, but in deed and in truth*; witness the works of mercy that adorned your lives, or the fruits of the spirit that now replenish your souls. *You, of all the families of the earth, have I known* with approbation. Ye have not *denied me in works*; or if ye have, bitter repentance, and purifying, renovating faith followed your denial; and by *keeping that faith, ye continued in my covenant, and endured unto the end*.

“Thou see’st ~~is~~, righteous Father, for to Thee the books are always open. Thou readest *my laws in their mind*, and beholdest my loving precepts *written in their hearts*: I therefore *confess them before Thee*; and before You, my *Angels*, who have seen them agonize, and *follow me through the regeneration*. I take the new heavens and the new earth to witness, that *I am to them a God, and they are to me a people*. They walked *WORTHY of God, who called them to his kingdom and glory*; therefore *they are worthy of me*.”

“I have confessed your persons, O ye *just men made perfect*, Ye precious *jewels* of my mediatorial crown; let me next reward your works. In the days of my flesh I declared, that *a cup of water given in my name* (and my name, ye know, is *Mercy, Goodness and Love*) *should in no wise lose its reward*; and that *whosoever should forsake earthly friends or property for righteousness’ sake, should have an hundred fold, and everlasting life*. The pillars of heaven have given way; but my promise stands firm as the basis of my throne. Triumph in my faithfulness, as you have in my forgiving love. I bestow on all, crowns of blissful immortality; I *appoint unto each a kingdom which shall not be destroyed*. Be *Kings and Priests unto God for ever*. Prepare to follow me to the realms of glory, and there *whatsoever is right (δικαιον) that shall ye receive*; in *just proportion to the various degrees of perfec-*

tion, with which you have obeyed my law, and improved your talents."

Thus are the persons of the righteous accepted, and their works *praised in the gate* of heaven, and *rewarded in the kingdom of their Father*. Thus they receive crowns of life and glory; but it is only to cast them to all eternity, with unutterable transports, grateful, humble love, at the feet of him who was crowned with piercing thorns, and hung bleeding upon the cross, to purchase their thrones.

While they shout *Salvation to God and the Lamb!* the Judge turns to the left hand, where trembling myriads stand waiting for their fearful doom. O how does confusion cover their faces, and guilty horror rack their breasts, while he says with the firmness of the eternal Lawgiver, and the majesty of the Lord of Lords; *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not †!*

Some

† Should some sincere followers of Christ read these lines, and be convinced they never visited Christ *in prison*, never entertained him in a *stranger*, &c. it is proper they should be humbled for having overlooked this important part of *pure religion*; and consider next how far it is in their power literally to practise it. Some live at a great distance from prisons, and are necessarily detained at home. Some (as women) could not in many places visit prisoners with decency. Others are altogether unable to do good to the souls or bodies of the sick and captives, being themselves sick, poor, and confined. If thou art in any of these cases, believer, canst not thou influence others to do what is out of thy power? Canst thou not send the relief thou art unable to carry, and shew thy good-will by cutting off thy superfluities, sparing some of thy conveniencies, and at times a little of thy necessities for thy sick, naked, hungry or imprisoned Lord? If thou art so indigent and infirm, that thou canst absolutely do nothing for the bodies of thy fellow-creatures,

Some are not yet *speechless*; they only falter. With the trembling infolence of Adam, not yet driven out of paradise, they even dare to plead their desperate cause. While stubborn sons of Babel say, "Lord, thy Father is merciful; and if thou didst die for *all*, why not for *us*?" While obstinate Pharisees plead the good they did in their own name, to supersede the Redeemer's merit; methinks I hear a bold Antinomian addressing thus the Lord of glory:

"Lord, when saw we *THEE* hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to *THEE*? Had we seen *THEE*, dear Lord, in any distress, how gladly would we have relieved thy wants! Numbers can witness how well we spoke of *thee*, and *thy* righteousness: It was all our boast. Bring it out in this important hour. Hide not the gospel of thy free grace. We always delighted in pure doctrine, in "Salvation without any condition; especially without the condition of works." Stand, gracious Lord, stand by us, and the preachers of thy free grace, who made us hope thou wouldst confirm their word."

"While they taught us to call thee *Lord, Lord*, they assured us that love would *constrain* us to do good works; but finding no inward constraint to

creatures, endeavour to do works of mercy for their souls; exhort, reprove, comfort, instruct, as thou canst, all around thee, in the meekness of wisdom. If thou canst do works of mercy, neither with thy tongue, hands, nor feet, then be the more diligent to do them with thy heart. In spirit, visit prisons and sick-beds. If thou hast no house to take in strangers, open to them thy heart; earnestly recommend them to God, who can supply all their wants, and open to them *the Gate of Heaven*, when they lie under a hedge; as He once did to Jacob in the fields of Bethel. Give thy heart continually to the Lord, and thou givest more than a mountain of gold; and the moment thou canst give a cup of water in his name, bestow it as freely as he did his blood; remembering, *God loves a cheerful giver*, and that it is *accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*,

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entertain

entertain strangers, visit the sick, and relieve prisoners, we did it not ; supposing we were not called thereto. They continually told us, “ human righteousness was mere filth before thee ; and we could not appear but to our everlasting shame in any righteousness but thine, in the day of judgment.” As to works, we were afraid of doing them, lest we should have *worked out* abominations instead of *our salvation*.”

“ And, indeed, Lord, what need was there of our *working it out* ? For they perpetually assured us, it was *finished* ; saying, if we did any thing towards it, we worked for life, fell from grace like the bewitched Galatians, spoiled thy perfect work ; and exposed ourselves to the destruction which awaits yonder trembling Pharisees.”

“ They likewise assured us, that all depended on *thy* decrees ; and if we could but firmly believe our *election*, it was a sure sign we were interested in thy salvation. We did so ; and now, Lord, for the sake of a few dung-works we have omitted, let not our hope perish ! Let not electing and everlasting love fail ! Visit our offences with a rod, but take not thy loving kindness altogether from us ; and break not David’s covenant, ordered in all things and sure, of which we have so often made our boast.”

“ May it please thee also to consider, that if we did not love and assist some of those whom thou callest *thy Brethren*, it was because they appeared to us so exceedingly legal ; so strongly set against free grace, that we judged them to be obstinate Pharisees, and dangerous reprobates. We therefore thought that in hating and opposing them, we did thee service, and walked in thy steps. For thou hast said, *It is enough if the servant is as his Lord* ; and supposing *thou* didst *hate them*, as thou dost Satan ; *we* thought we need not be more righteous than thou, by loving them more than *thou* didst.”

“ O suffer us to speak on, and tell thee, we were champions for thy free grace. Like true Protestants, we could have burned against the doctrine of a second justification by works. Let then *grace* justify us *freely without works*. Shut those books † filled with the account of our deeds, open the arms of thy mercy, and receive us just as we are.”

“ If *free grace* cannot justify us alone, let *faith* do it, together with free grace: We do *believe* finished salvation, Lord; we can join in the most evangelical creeds, and are ready to confess the virtue of thy atoning blood. But if thou sayest, we have *trampled it under foot*, and *made it a common thing*, grant us our last request, and it is enough.”

“ Cut out the immaculate garment of *thy righteousness* into robes that may fit us all, and put them upon us by *imputation*: So shall our nakedness be gloriously covered. We confess we have not dealt our bread to the hungry; but impute to us thy feeding 5000 people with loaves and fishes. We have seldom given drink to the thirsty, and often *put our bottle to* those who were not athirst; but impute to us thy turning water into wine, to refresh the guests at the marriage-feast in Cana; and thy loud call, *in the last day of the feast at Jerusalem*; *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink*. We never supposed it was our duty to *be given to hospitality*; but impute to us thy loving invitations to strangers, thy kind assurances of receiving *all that come to thee*; thy comfortable promises of *casting out none*, and of feeding them even with thy *flesh and blood*. We did not clothe

† This plea is excellent when a man comes to Christ, his High Priest, as a sinner for pardon and holiness, or for his first justification on earth; but it will be absurd when he *stands before the throne of Christ* as a rebellious subject, or before his *judgment-seat* as a criminal in the last day.

the naked as we had opportunity and ability; impute to us thy patient parting with thy seamless garment, for the benefit of thy murderers. We did not visit sick-beds and prisons, we were afraid of fevers, and especially of the jail-distemper: But compassionately impute to us thy visiting Jairus's daughter, and *Peter's wife's mother, who lay sick of a fever*; and put to our account thy visiting putrefying Lazarus in the offensive prison of the grave."

"Thy imputed righteousness, Lord, can alone answer all the demands of thy law and gospel. We did not dare to *fast*; we should have been called *legal* and *Papists* if we had; but thy forty days fasting in the wilderness, and thy continual abstinence imputed to us, will be self-denial enough to justify us ten times over. We did not *take up our cross*; but impute to us thy *carrying THINE*; and even fainting under the oppressive load. We did not *mortify the deeds of the flesh, that we might live*: This would have been evidently "working for life;" but impute to us the crucifixion of *thy* body, instead of our *crucifying OUR flesh, with its affections and lusts*. We hated private prayer; but impute to us thy love of that duty, and the prayer thou didst offer upon a mountain all night. We have been rather hard to forgive, but that defect will be abundantly made up, if thou impute to us thy forgiving of the dying thief: And if that will not do, add, we beseech thee, the merit of that good saying of thine, *Forgive and you shall be forgiven*. We have cheated the king of his customs; but no matter, only impute to us thy exact paying of the tribute-money, together with thy good advice, *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's*."

"It is true, we have brought up our children in vanity, and thou never hadst any to bring up. May not thy mercy find out an expedient, and impute to us instead of it, thy obedience to thy
parents?

parents? And if we have received the sacrament unworthily, and thou canst not cover that sin with thy worthy *receiving*, indulge us with the imputation of thy worthy *institution* of it, and that will do yet better."

"In short, Lord, own us *freely* as thy children. Impute to us thy perfect righteousness. Cast it as a cloke upon us, to cover our filthy souls and polluted bodies. "We will have no righteousness but thine:" make no mention, we beseech thee, of *our* righteousness and personal holiness; they are but *filthy rags*, which thy purity forbids thee to take into heaven; therefore accept us without, and we shall shout *free grace, imputed righteousness, and finished salvation*, to eternity."

While the bold Antinomian offers, or prepares to offer, this most impious plea, the Lord, who *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, casts a flaming look upon all the obstinate violators of his Law. It pierces their conscience, rouses all its drowzy powers, and restores their memory to its original perfection. Not one with passed their heart, or thought their brain, but is instantly brought to their remembrance: *the books are opened* in their own breast, and every character has a voice which answers to the voice of *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*.

"Shall I pervert judgment, says he, and justify the wicked for a bribe? The bribe of your abominable praises? *Think you*, by your base flatteries, to escape the righteous judgment of God? Is not my wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness? Much more against you, ye *Vessels of wrath*; who hold an impious absurdity in matchless insolence."

"Said I not to Cain himself at the beginning, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Personal holiness, which ye scorned, is the *wedding garment* I now look for. I swear in my wrath that,

without it, none shall taste of my heavenly supper. Ye have rejected my word of commandment, and I reject you from being kings. Ye cried unto me, and I delivered you. Yet have ye forsaken me, and served other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more: go and cry unto the gods whom ye have chosen. I round the hairy scalp of such as have gone on still in their wickedness. Whosoever hath sinned against me to the last, him do I blot out of my book: and this you have done, Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, awake to everlasting shame!——Will ye set the briers and thorns against me in battle, and make them pass for roses of Sharon, and lillies of the valleys? I will go through them with a look, and consume them together. The day is come that burneth like an oven: All that have DONE wickedly are stubble, and must be burnt up root and branch. Upon such I rain snares, fire, and brimstone; storm and tempest: this is the portion of their cup. Drink the dregs of it, Ye hypocrites, depart! And wring them out in everlasting burnings.”

“ Said I not, He that DOES good is of God, but he that DOES evil is not of God: Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life; for he that overcometh, and he only, shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. And shall I keep your name in that book for having continued in doing evil? Shall I give you the crown of life for having been unfaithful unto death; and clothe you with the bright robes of my glory, because you defiled your garments to the last? Delusive hope! Because your mind was not to do good, be ye rather clothed with cursing, like as with a garment! Let it come into your bowels like water, and like oil into your bones!”

VII.

If *these shall go into eternal punishment*; if such will be the dreadful end of all the impenitent Nicolaitans; if our churches and chapels swarm with them, if they croud our communion-tables, if they are found in most of our houses, and too many of our pulpits: if the seeds of their fatal disorder are in all our breasts; if they produce Antinomianism around us in all its forms; if we see bold Antinomians in *principle*, barefaced Antinomians in *practice*, and sly *pharisaical Antinomians*, who speak well of the law, to break it with greater advantage; Should not every one *examine himself whether he is in the faith*, and whether he has an *holy Christ* in his heart, as well as a *sweet Jesus* upon his tongue; lest he should one day swell the tribe of antinomian reprobates? Does it not become every minister of Christ to drop his prejudices, and consider whether he ought not to imitate the old Watchman, who, 15 months ago, gave a *legal alarm* to all the watchmen that are in connexion with him? And should we not do the church excellent service, if agreeing to lift up our voices together against the common enemy, we gave God no rest in prayer, and our hearers in preaching, till we all *did our first works*, and our *latter end*, like Job's, *exceeded our beginning*?

Near forty years ago, some of the ministers of Christ, in our church, were called out of the extreme of self-righteousness. Flying from it we have run into the opposite, with equal violence. Now that we have learned wisdom by what we have suffered in going beyond the limits of truth both ways, let us return to a just scriptural medium. Let us equally maintain the two evangel-
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gelical axioms on which the gospel is founded ; (1.) " All our salvation is of God by free grace, through the alone merits of Christ." And (2.) " All our damnation is of ourselves, through our avoidable unfaithfulness."

This second truth, as important as one half of the Bible, on which it rests, has not only been set aside as useless by thousands, but generally exploded as unscriptural, dangerous, and subversive of true protestantism. Thus has the gospel-balance been broken, and St. James's pure religion despised. What we owe to Truth in a state of oppression, hath engaged me to cast two mites into the scale of truth, which Mr. W. has the courage to defend against multitudes of good men, who keep one another in countenance, under their common mistake. I do not want *his* scale to preponderate to the disadvantage of free grace: If it did, far from rejoicing in it, I would instantly throw the insignificant weight of my pen into the other scale; being fully persuaded that Christ can never be so truly honored, nor souls so well edified, when we overdo on either side of the question, as when we scripturally maintain the *whole* truth as it is in Jesus.

" But are we not in as much danger from overdoing in pharisaic works, as in antinomian faith?"

Not at present: The stream runs too rapidly on the side of lawless faith, to leave any just room to fear we shall be immediately carried into excessive working. There would be some ground for this objection; if we saw most professors of religion obstinately refusing to drink any thing but water, eat any thing but dry bread or cheap vegetables; fasting themselves into mere skeletons; wearing sack-cloth instead of soft linen; lying on the bare ground, with a stone for their pillow; imitating Origen, by literally *making themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*; turning hermits.

hermits, spending whole nights in contemplation in churches and churchyards; giving away all their goods, the necessities of life not excepted; allowing themselves only three or four hours sleep, and even breaking that short rest to pray or praise; overpowering their bodies the next day with hard labour, to keep them under; scourging their backs unto blood every day; or forgetting themselves in prayer for hours in the coldest weather, till they have almost lost the use of their limbs. But I ask any unprejudiced person, who knows what is now called, "gospel-liberty," whether we are in danger of being thus *righteous over-much*, or legal to such an extreme?

I grant however we are not absolutely safe from any quarter: let us therefore continually stand on our guard. The right wing of Immanuel's army, which defends living faith, is partly gone over to the enemy, and fights under the Nicolaitan banner. The left wing, which defends good works, is far from being out of the reach of those crafty adversaries. Therefore, as we are, or may be attacked on every side, let us faithfully use *the word of truth, the power of God, and the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left*. Let us gallantly fly where the attack is the hottest, which now, *in the religious world*, is evidently where gross *Crispianity* (if I may use the word) is continually obtruded upon us as true *Christianity*: I say, *in the religious world*; for, in this controversy, *what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are WITHIN*, and represent them as opposers of free grace?

Should Pharisees, while we are engaged in repelling the Nicolaitans, try to rob us of present and free justification by faith, under pretence of maintaining justification by works in the last day; or should they set us upon unnecessary, and unscriptural works, we shall be glad of your assistance to repel them also.

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If you grant it us, and do not despise ours, the world shall admire in the *Shulamite* (the Church at unity in herself) *the company of two armies*, ready mutually to support each other against the opposite attacks of the Pharisees and the Nicolaitans; the *popish workers* who exclude the gospel, and the modern gnostics, the *Protestant Antinomians*, who explode the Law.

May the Lord God help us to sail safely through these opposite rocks, keeping at an equal distance from both, by taking Christ for our Pilot, and the Scripture for our Compass! So shall we enter full sail the double haven of present and eternal rest. Once we were in immediate danger of splitting upon *Works, without faith*; now we are threatened with destruction from faith, *without works*: May the merciful Keeper of Israel save us from both, by a *living faith*, legally productive of all good works, or by *good works*, evangelically springing from a living faith!

Should the divine blessing upon these sheets, bring one single Reader a step towards that good old way, or only confirm one single believer in it, I shall be *rewarded a hundred fold* for this little *labour of love*; and I shall be even content to see it represented as the invidious labour of malice: for what is my reputation to the profit of one blood-bought soul!

Beseeching you, dear Sir, for whom these letters are first intended, to set me right where I am wrong; and not to despise what may recommend itself in them to reason and conscience, on account of the blunt and Helvetic manner in which they are written, I remain, with sincere respect,

Honored and Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient servant
in the practical gospel of Christ,

J. F.

Since these Letters were sent to the press, I have seen a pamphlet, intitled, “ A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq; the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh,” a Monk at Paris, who condemned Mr. Wesley’s Minutes as “ too near Pelagianism,” and the author as “ a Pelagian;” adding, that, “ *their* doctrine was a great deal nearer that of the Protestants.” Hence the editor concludes, that “ the principles in the extract of the Minutes are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon, and supposes that Popery is about the mid-way between Protestantism and Mr. J. Wesley.” I shall just make a few strictures upon that performance.

(1.) If an Arian came to me, and said: You believe that *Jesus Christ is God over all, blessed for ever*. "Pelagius, that heretic who was publicly excommunicated by the whole Catholic Church," was of your sentiment; therefore you are a Pelagian; give up your heresy: Should I, upon such an assertion, give up the Godhead of our Saviour? Certainly no. And shall I, upon a similar argument, advanced by the help of a French Monk, give up truths with which the practical gospel of Jesus Christ must stand or fall? God forbid!

(2.) We desire to be confronted with all the pious Protestant divines, except those of Dr. Crisp's class; who are a party: But, who would believe it? The suffrage of a Papist is brought against us! Astonishing! That our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself!

(3.) So long as Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles are for us, together with the multitude of the Puritan divines of the last century, we shall smile at an army of Popish friars. The knotted
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whips that hang by their side, will no more frighten us from our Bibles, than the *ipse dixit* of a Benedictine monk will make us explode, as heretical, propositions which are demonstrated to be scriptural.

(4.) An argument which has been frequently used of late against the *Anticalvinist* Divines is, "This is downright Popery! This is worse than Popery itself!" And honest Protestants have been driven by it to embrace doctrines, which were once no less contrary to the dictates of their conscience, than they are still to the word of God. It is proper therefore such persons should be informed, that St. Augustin, the Calvin of the fourth century, is one of the Saints whom the Popes have in the highest veneration; and that a great number of friars in the church of Rome are champions for Calvinism, and oppose St. Paul's doctrine, that *the grace of God bringeth salvation, has appeared unto all men*, as strenuously as some real Protestants do among us. Now, if good Father Walsh is one of that stamp, what wonder is it that he should so well agree with the gentlemen who consulted him! If Calvinism and Protestantism are synonymous terms, as some divines would make us believe, many monks may well say, that *their doctrine is a great deal nearer that of the Protestants* than the Minutes; for they may even pass for real Protestants.

(5.) But whether the good friar is a hot *Jansenist*, or only a warm *Thomist*, (so they call the popish Calvinists in France) we appeal from his bar to the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and from the published conversation to the law and the testimony. What is the decision of a popish monk to the express declarations of the scripture, the dictates of common sense, the experiences of regenerate souls, and the writings of a cloud of Protestant divines? No more than a grain of loose sand to the solid rock on which the church is founded.

I. hope

I hope the gentlemen concerned in the conversation lately published, will excuse the liberty of this Postscript. I reverence their piety, rejoice in their labours, and honor their warm zeal for the protestant cause. But that very zeal, if not accompanied with a close attention to every part of the gospel-truth, may betray them into mistakes which may spread as far as their respectable names; I think it therefore my duty to publish these strictures, lest any of my readers should pay more regard to the good-natured friar, who has been pressed into the service of Dr. Crisp, than to St. John, St. Paul, St. James, and Jesus Christ, on whose plain declarations I have shewn that the Minutes are founded.

F I N I S.

Stephenson
Bill, Sir Richard, bart.,
1737-1808: Fine letters
to ... Mr. Fletcher,

John William Fletcher

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T H I R D C H E C K
T O
A N T I N O M I A N I S M ;

I N A
L E T T E R t o t h e A U T H O R o f
P I E T A S O X O N I E N S I S :

By the Vindicator of the
Rev. Mr. W E S L E Y ' s M I N U T E S .

" Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and *scriptural*
" doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure
" sound doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.

" *Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the faith ;*
" but let brotherly love continue."

Tit. i. 13. Heb. xiii. 1.

B R I S T O L :

Printed by W. PINE, in Wine-Street, 1772.

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T H I R D C H E C K

T O

ANTINOMIANISM, &c.

Honored and dear Sir,

A CCEPT my sincere thanks for the Christian courtesy, with which you treat me in your five letters. The title-page informs me, that a concern for *mourning backsliders, and such as have been distressed by reading Mr. Wesley's minutes, or the vindication of them*, has procured me the honor of being called to a public correspondence with you. Permit me, dear Sir, to inform you in my turn, that a fear, lest Dr. Crisp's balm should be applied, instead of the *balm of Gilead*, to Laodicean loiterers, who may haply have been brought to penitential *distress*, obliges me to answer you in the same public manner, in which you have addressed me.

Some of our friends will undoubtedly blame us for not yet dropping the contested point. But others will candidly consider, that controversy, tho' not desirable in itself, yet properly managed, has an hundred times rescued truth groaning under the lash of triumphant error. We are indebted to our Lord's controversies with the Pharisees and Scribes for a considerable part of the four gospels. And to the end of the world the church will bless God, for the spirited manner in which St. Paul, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, defended the controvert-

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ed point of a believer's present justification by faith ; as well as for the steadiness with which St. James, St. John, St. Peter, and St. Jude, carried on their important controversy with the Nicolaitans, who abused St. Paul's doctrine to Antinomian purposes.

Had it not been for controversy, Romish priests would to this day feed us with Latin masses and a wafer-god. Some bold propositions, advanced by Luther against the doctrine of indulgences, unexpectedly brought on the reformation. They were so irrationally attacked by the infatuated Papists, and so scripturally defended by the resolute Protestants, that these kingdoms opened their eyes, and saw thousands of images and errors fall before the ark of evangelical truth.

From what I have advanced in my *Second Check*, it appears, if I am not mistaken, that we stand now as much in need of a reformation from Antinomianism, as our ancestors did of a reformation from Popery ; and I am not without hope, that the extraordinary attack, which has lately been made upon Mr. Wesley's Anti-crispian propositions, and the manner in which they are defended, will open the eyes of many, and check the rapid progress of so enchanting and pernicious an evil. This hope inspires me with fresh courage ; and turning from the honorable and Rev. Mr. Shirley, I presume to face (I trust, in the spirit of love and meekness) my new respectable opponent.

I thank you, Sir, for doing Mr. W. the justice in your

FIRST LETTER

to acknowledge, that "*man's faithfulness is an expression, which may be used in a sober, gospel sense of the words.*" 'Tis just in such a sense we use it ; nor have you advanced any proof to the contrary.

We never supposed, that "*the faithfulness of God, and the stability of the covenant of grace, are affected by the unfaithfulness of man*". For, we do not take the young man, whom Jesus loved to be God. His unfaithfulness

faithfulness in the mammon of unrighteousness, did not, therefore impair, in the least degree, the *divine faithfulness*. And we are persuaded, our Lord keeps his covenant, when he *spues a lukewarm, unfaithful Laodicean out of his mouth*, as well as when he says to the good and faithful servant, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*. For the same covenant of grace which says, *He that believeth shall be saved—he that abideth in me, bringeth forth much fruit*, says also, *He that believeth not shall be damned—every branch in me that beareth not fruit is cast forth and burned*.

Thanks be to divine grace, we make our boast of *God's faithfulness*, as well as you, tho' we take care not to charge him, even indirectly with our own unfaithfulness. But from the words which you quote, *My covenant shall stand fast with his seed, &c.* we see no more reason to conclude that the *obstinately unfaithful seed of Christ*, such as *Hymeneus Philetus*, and those who to the last tread under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, shall not be cast off; than to assert that many individuals of David's royal family, such as Absalom and Amnon, were not cut off on account of their flagrant and obstinate wickedness.

We beseech you therefore; for the sake of a thousand careless Antinomians, to remember that the apostle says to every believer, *Thou standest by faith; behold therefore the goodness of God towards thee; if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*. We intreat you to consider, that even those who admire the point of your epigram, "Where e'er we say one thing we mean quite another," will not be pleased if you apply it to St. Paul, as you have done to Mr. Wesley. And when we see God's covenant with David grossly abused by Antinomians, we beg leave to put them in mind of God's covenant with the house of Eli. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, *I chose thy father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest; but thou art unfaithful, thou honorest thy sons above me.—I said indeed that thy house, and the*

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house of thy father, should walk before me for ever : but now be it far from me ; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy house ; and I will raise me up a FAITHFUL priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart.
1 Sam. 2.

Your SECOND LETTER respects *working for life*. You make the best of a bad subject ; and really some of your arguments are so plausible, that I do not wonder so many good men should commence Calvinists, rather than be at the trouble of detecting their fallacy. I am sorry, dear Sir, I cannot do it without dwelling upon Calvinism. My design was to oppose Antinomianism alone ; but the vigorous stand which you make for it upon Calvinian ground, obliges me to encounter you there, or to give up the truth which I am called to defend. I have long dreaded the alternative of displeasing my friends, or wounding my conscience ; but I must yield to the injunctions of the latter, and appeal to the candor of the former. If impetuous rivers of Geneva Calvinism have so long been permitted to flow thro' England, and even deluge Scotland ; have not I some reason to hope that a rivulet of Geneva Anti-calvinism will be suffered to glide thro' some of Great-Britain's plains ; especially if its little murmur harmonizes with the clearest dictates of reason, and loudest declarations of scripture ?

Before I weigh your arguments against *working for life*, permit me to point out the capital mistake upon which they turn. You suppose that free preventing grace does not visit all men, and that all those in whom it has not yet prevailed, are as totally dead to the things of God, as a dead body is to the things of this life : and from this unscriptural supposition you very reasonably conclude, that we can no more turn to God, than corpses can turn themselves in their graves ; no more *work for life* than putrid carcases can help themselves to a resurrection.

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This main pillar of your doctrine, will appear to you built upon the sand, if you read the scripture in the light of that *mercy which is over all God's works*. There you will discover the various dispensations of the everlasting gospel; your contracted views of divine love will open into the most extensive prospects; and your exulting soul will range thro' the boundless fields of that grace, which is both richly free *IN all*, and abundantly free *FOR all*.

Let us rejoice with reverence while we read such scriptures as these: *The Son of man is come to save that which is LOST, and to call SINNERS to repentance. This is a true saying and worthy of all acceptat. on—worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.—To this end he both died and rose again that he might be the Lord of the DEAD and LIVING. He came not to condemn the WORLD, but that the WORLD thro' him might be saved, and that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE should bow, and EVERY TONGUE confess that he is Lord.*

“Bound ev'ry heart and ev'ry beform burn” while we meditate on these ravishing declarations: God so loved the WORLD that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that is, all mankind; unless it can be proved that some men never came under the curse of the law. He is the friend of SINNERS, the physician of the SICK; and the Saviour of the WORLD: He died, the just for the UNJUST; He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD. One died for ALL, because ALL were dead. As in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ, during the day of their visitation, all are blessed with quickning grace, and therefore in the last day ALL shall be made alive to give an account of their blessing or talent. He is the Saviour of ALL men, especially of them that believe; and the news of his birth are tidings of great joy to ALL people. As by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL MEN, even so by the righteousness of one the FREE GIFT came.

came upon ALL MEN; for Christ by the grace of God tasted death for EVERY MAN; he is the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the WORLD, therefore God commandeth ALL MEN EVERY WHERE to repent—to look unto him and be saved.

Do we not take choice jewels from Christ's crown, when we explain away these bright testimonies given to his free grace: *It pleased the Father by him to reconcile ALL THINGS to himself.*—*The kindness and pity of God our Saviour towards MAN has appeared.*—*I will draw all men unto me.*—*I came NOT to judge the WORLD but to save the WORLD.*—*He came into the world TO SAVE SINNERS, the CHIEF not excepted.*—*God was in him reconciling the WORLD unto himself.* Hence he says to the most obstinate of his opposers, *These things have I spoken unto you that you might be saved.*—*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin in rejecting me, but now they have no cloak for their sin, no excuse for their unbelief.*

Once indeed, when the apostles were on the brink of the most dreadful trial, their compassionate Master said, *I pray for them, I pray not for the WORLD.* “As if he had said, their immediate danger makes me pray as if there were but these eleven men in the world, *holy Father keep them.*” But having given them this seasonable testimony of a just preference, he adds, *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them who shall believe:*—and he prays they may be the WORLD,—*that the WORLD may believe—and may know that thou hast sent me.*

If our Lord's *not praying* for a moment on a particular occasion *for the world*, implies that the world is absolutely reprobated, we should be glad of an answer to the two following queries. (1) Why did he pray the next day for Pilate and Herod, Annas and Caiaphas, the Priests and Pharisees, the Jewish mob and Roman soldiers; in a word for the countless multitude of his revilers and murderers? Were they all elect, or was this ejaculation no prayer? *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!* (2.) Why did

did he commission St. Paul to say; *I exhort first of all, that supplications, prayers, and intercessions be made for ALL MEN, for this is acceptable in the sight of God OUR SAVIOUR, who will have ALL MEN to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and MEN, the MAN Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom FOR ALL?*

Without losing time in proving, that none but artful and designing men, use the word *all* to mean the *less* number; and that *all*, in some of the abovementioned passages, must absolutely mean *all mankind*, as being directly opposed to *all* that are *condemned* and *die in Adam*; and without stopping to expose the new Calvinian creation of “a whole world of elect;” upon the preceeding scriptures I raise the following doctrine of free grace. If *Christ tasted death for every man*, there is undoubtedly a gospel for every man, even for those who perish by rejecting it.

St. Paul says, that *God shall judge the secrets of MEN, according to his gospel*. St. Peter asks, *What shall be the end of those, who obey not the GOSPEL of God?* And the apostle answers, *Christ revealed in flaming fire will take vengeance on them who obey not the GOSPEL*, that is, all the *ungodly who receive the grace of God in vain, or turn it into lasciviousness*. They do not perish because the gospel is a lie with respect to them; but *because they receive not the love of the TRUTH that they might be SAVED*. God, to punish their rejecting the truth, permits that they should *believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who to the last hour of their day of grace believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*.

The latitude of our Lord's commission to his ministers demonstrates the truth of this doctrine. *Go into ALL the world, and teach ALL nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Hence those gracious and general invitations, *Ho EVERY ONE that thirsteth after happiness, come ye to the waters; If any man thirst after pleasure, let him come to me and drink.—Come unto me all ye that labour*

labour for want of rest, and I will give it you.—WHO-
SOEVER will, let him come and take of the water of life
freely.—Ye adulterers,—draw nigh unto God, and he will
draw nigh unto you.—Behold I stand at the door and
knock, if ANY MAN open, I will come in and sup with
him. Go out into the highways and hedges, preach the
gospel to EVERY CREATURE, and lo I am with you to
the end of the world.

If you compare all the preceeding scriptures, I
flatter myself Hon. Sir, you will perceive that as the
redemption of Christ is general, so there is a general
gospel, which is more or less clearly revealed to all,
according to the clearer or more obscure dispensa-
tion which they are outwardly under.

This doctrine may appear strange to those who call
nothing gospel but the last dispensation of it. Such
should remember that as a little seed sown in the spring
is one with the large plant into which it expands in
summer; so the gospel in its least appearance, is one
with the gospel grown up to full maturity. Our
Lord considering it both as sown in man's heart, and
sown in the world, speaks of it under the name of *the*
kingdom of heaven, compares it to corn, and considers
first the *seed*, then the *blade*, next the *ear*, and last of
all the *full corn in the ear*.

(1.) The gospel was sown in the world as a *little*
but general *seed*, when God began to quicken man-
kind in Adam, by the precious promise of a Saviour:
and when he said to Noah, the second general parent
of men, *With thee will I establish my covenant; blessing*
him and his sons after the deluge.

(2.) The gospel appeared as corn in the *blade*, when
God renewed the promise of the Messiah to Abraham
with this addition, that tho' the Redeemer should be
born of his elect family, divine grace and mercy
were too *free* to be confined within the narrow bounds
of a peculiar election: therefore in his *seed*, that is, in
Christ the sun of righteousness ALL the families of the earth
should be blessed; as they are all cheered with the genial
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influence of the natural sun, whether he shines above or below their horizon, whether he particularly enlightens the one or the other hemisphere.

(3.) The gospel word grew much in the days of Moses, Samuel and Isaiah; for *the gospel*, says St. Paul, *was preached unto them as well as unto us*, tho' not so explicitly. But when John the Baptist a greater prophet than they all, began to preach the gospel of repentance, and point sinners to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, then the ear crowned the blade which had long been at a stand, and even seemed to be blasted.

(4.) The great Luminary of the church shining warm upon the earth, his direct beams caused a rapid growth. The favonian breathings and sighs which attended his preaching and prayers, the genial dews which distilled on Gethsemane, during his agony, the fruitful showers which descended on Calvary, while the blackest storm of divine wrath rent the rocks around, and the transcendent radiance of our sun, rising after this dreadful eclipse to his meridian glory;—all concurred to minister fertile influences to the plant of renown. And on the day of pentecost, when power came from on high, when the fire of the Holy Ghost seconded the virtue of the Redeemer's blood, the full corn was seen in the mystical ear; the most perfect of the gospel-dispensations came to maturity; and Christians began to bring forth fruit unto the perfection of their own œconomy.

As some good men overlook the gradual displays of the manifold gospel-grace of God, so others I fear, mistake the essence of the gospel itself. Few say with St. Paul *the gospel of which I am not ashamed, is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth with the heart unto righteousness*, according to the light of his dispensation: and many are afraid of his Catholic doctrine, when he sums up the general everlasting gospel in these words: *God was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; because that which may be known of God, under their dispensation, is manifest*

manifest in them, God having shewed it unto them. For the grace of God which bringeth salvation, or rather *ἡ χάρις*, *ἡ σωτηρία*, the grace emphatically saving, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, justly and godly in this present world.

“ But how does this saving grace teach us?” By proposing to us the saving truths of our dispensation, and helping our unbelief, that we may cordially embrace them; for without faith it is impossible to please God. Even the Heathens who come to God must BELIEVE that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him: for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, the same Lord over all being rich unto all that call upon him.

Here the Apostle starts the great Calvinian objection: But how shall they believe, and call on him of whom they have not heard, &c.? And having observed that the Jews had heard, tho’ few had believed, he says, So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, which is nigh, even in the mouth and in the heart of all who receive the truth revealed under their dispensation. Then resuming his answer to the Calvinian objection he cries out, Have not they (Jews and Greeks) all heard preachers, who invite them to believe that God is good and powerful, and consequently that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him? Yes verily, replies he, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

“ If you ask, Who are those general heralds of free grace, whose sound goes from pole to pole?” The scripture answers with becoming dignity: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech or language, no country or kingdom, where their voice is not heard. Their instructing line went thro’ the earth their vast parish, and their words to the end of the world their immense diocese. For the invisible things of God, that is, his greatness and wisdom, his goodness and mercy,
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his eternal power and godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made and preserved, so that the very Heathens, who do not obey their striking speech, are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.

This is the gospel-alphabet, if I may be allowed the expression. The Apostle, like a wise instructor, proceeded upon the plan of this free grace when he addressed himself to the Heathens. *We preach unto you, said he to the Lycaonians, that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things therein; who, even when he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, left not himself without witness; that is, without preachers, according to that saying of our Lord to his disciples, Ye shall be my witnesses, and teach all nations. And these witnesses were the good which God did, the rain he gave us from heaven, fruitful seasons, and the food and gladness with which he filled our hearts.*

St. Paul preached the same gospel to the Athenians, wisely coming down to the level of their inferior dispensation. *The God that made the world dwells not, like a statue, in temples made with hands, nor hath he need of any thing; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. He hath made of one blood all nations of men who dwell on all the face of the earth, not that they might live like Atheists, and perish like reprobates, but that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him. Nor is this an impossibility, as he is not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being, as certain of your own poets have taught, justly asserting that we are the offspring of God. Hence he proceeds to declare, that God calls all men every where to repent, intimating that upon their turning to him, he will receive them as his dear children, and bless them as his beloved offspring.*

These, and the like scriptures forced Calvin himself into an happy inconsistency with Calvinism.

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“ The Lord; says he in an epistle prefixed to the French new Testament, never left himself without a witness, even towards them unto whom he has not sent any knowledge of his word. Forasmuch as all creatures, from the firmament to the center of the earth, might be witnesses and messengers of his glory unto all men, to draw them to seek him; and indeed there is no need to seek him very far, for every one might find him in his ownself.”

And no doubt some have; for altho’ *the world knew not God by the wisdom that is earthly, sensual and devilish*; yet many have sayingly known him by his general witnesses, that is, *the wonderful works that he doth for the children of men*; for that *which may be known of God, in the lowest œconomy of gospel grace, is manifest in them, as well as shewn unto them.*

“ What! Is there something of God inwardly manifest in, as well as outwardly shewn to all men?” Undoubtedly; the grace of God is as *the wind*, which *bloweth where it listeth*; and it *listeth* to blow with more or less force successively all over the earth. You can as soon meet with a man that never felt the wind, or heard the sound thereof, as with one that never felt the divine breathings, or heard the *still small voice*, which we call the grace of God, and which bid us turn from sin to righteousness. To suppose the Lord gives us a thousand tokens of *his eternal power and godhead*, without giving us a capacity to consider, and grace to improve them, is not less absurd than to imagine that when he bestowed upon Adam all the trees of paradise for food, he gave him no eyes to see, no hands to gather, and no mouth to eat their delicious fruits.

We readily grant that Adam, and we in him, lost all by the fall; but Christ, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Christ *the repairer of the breach*, mightier to save than Adam to destroy, solemnly gave himself to Adam, and to us in him, by the free everlasting gospel which he preached in paradise. And when he preached it he undoubtedly gave Adam, and

and us in him, a capacity to receive it, that is a power to believe and repent. If he had not, he might as well have preached to stocks and stones, to beasts and devils. It is offering an insult to *the only wise God*, to suppose that he gave mankind the light, without giving them eyes to behold it; or which is the same, to suppose that he gave them the gospel, without giving them power to believe it.

As it was with Adam, so it is undoubtedly with all his posterity. By what argument or scripture will you prove, that God excluded part of Adam (or what is the same thing, part of his off-spring, which was then part of his very person) from the promise and gift which he freely made him of *the seed of the woman, and the bruiser of the serpent's head*? Is it reasonable to deny the gift, because multitudes of infidels reject it, and thousands of Antinomians abuse it? May not a bounty be really given by a charitable person, tho' it is despised by a proud, or squandered by a loose beggar?

Waving the case of infants, idiots, and those who have *sinned the sin unto death*, was there ever a sinner under no obligation to repent and believe in a merciful God? O ye opposers of *free grace*, search the universe with Calvin's candle, and among your reprobated millions, find out the person that never had a merciful God: and shew us the unfortunate creature, whom a sovereign God bound over to absolute despair of his mercy from the womb. If there is no such person in the world: if all men are bound to repent and believe in a merciful God, there is an end of Calvinism. An unprejudiced man can require no stronger proof that all are redeemed from the curse of the Adamic law, which admitted of no repentance; and that the covenant of grace which admits of, and makes provision for it, freely extends to all mankind.

Out of Christ's fulness all have received grace, a little heaven of saving power, an inward monitor, a divine reprover, a ray of true heavenly light, which mani-
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feels first moral, and then spiritual good and evil. St. John bears witness of that light, and declares it was the spiritual life of men, the true light, which enlighteneth not only every man that comes into the church, but every man that cometh into the world—without excepting those who are yet in darkness. For the light shineth in the darkness, even when the darkness comprehends it not. The Baptist bore also witness of that light, that all men thro' it, not thro' him, might believe. (For light being the last antecedent, and agreeing perfectly with *ὁ αἰς*.)

Hence appears the sufficiency of that divine light, to make all men believe in Christ the light of the world; according to Christ's own words to the Jews, *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light.—Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you, even that total night of nature when no man can work.*

Those who resist this internal light generally reject the external gospel, or receive it only in the letter and history: and too many such there have been in all ages; for Christ was in the world, even when the world knew him not: therefore he was manifest in the flesh. The same sun which had shined as the dawn, arose with healing in his wings, and came to deliver the truth which was held in righteousness, and to help the light which was not comprehended by the darkness. But alas! when he came to his own, even then his own received him not. Why? Because they were reprobates? No: but because they were moral agents.

This is the condemnation, says he himself, that light came into the world, but men shut their eyes against it. They loved darkness rather than light, because their works were evil. They would go on in the sins which the light reprov'd, and therefore they oppos'd it till it was quenched, that is, till it totally withdrew from their hearts. To the same purpose our Lord says, *The heart of this people is waxed gross, their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed against the light, lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* The same unerring teacher informs

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us, that the devil cometh to the way-side hearers, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. And if our gospel is hid, says St. Paul, it is to them that believe not, and are lost, whose minds the God of this world hath blinded, lest the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.

From these scriptures it is evident that Calvin was mistaken, or that the devil is a fool. For if man is now totally blind why should the devil bestir himself to blind him? And why should he fear lest the gospel should shine to them that are lost, if there is absolutely no gospel for them, or they have no eyes to see, no capacity to receive it?

Whether sinners knew their gospel-day or not, they have one. Read the history of Cain, who is supposed to be the first reprobate; and see how graciously the Lord expostulated with him. Consider the old world: St. Peter speaking of them says, *The gospel was preached to them also that are dead; for Christ went by the Spirit, and preached even to those who were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited 120 years in the days of Noah.* Nor did the Lord wait with an intention of having them compleatly fattened for the day of slaughter: far be the unbecoming thought from those who worship the God of love! Instead of entertaining it, let us account that the long-suffering of our Lord is SALVATION, that is, a beginning of salvation, and a sure pledge of it: if we know and redeem the accepted time: for the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Nor does God's long-suffering extend to the elect only. It embraces also those who treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, by despising the riches of divine goodness and forbearance and LONG-SUFFERING, not knowing that the goodness of God leads them to repentance. Of this the Jews are a remarkable instance. What could God have done more to his Jewish vineyard? He gathered the stones of it; and planted it with the choicest vine; and yet when HE LOOKED that

it should have brought forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes: when he sent his servants to receive the fruits, they were abused and sent away empty. Hence it is evident that the Jews had a day, in which they could have brought forth fruit, or the wise God would no more have looked for it, than a wise man expects to see the pine-apple grow upon the haw-thorn.

Nay, the most obstinate, pharisaic, and bloody of the Jews had a day, in which our Lord in person, *would have gathered them with as much tenderdeſs, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. And when he ſaw their free-agency, abſolutely ſet againſt his loving-kindneſs, he wept over them, and deplored their not having known the things belonging unto their peace, before they were hid from their eyes.*

Our gracious God freely gives one or more talents of grace to every man: nor was ever any man *caſt into utter darkneſs where ſhall be weeping and gnawing of teeth,* but for the not uſing his talent aright, as our Lord ſufficiently declares, Matt. xxv. 30. Alluding to that important parable, I would obſerve, that the Chriſtian has five talents, the Jew two, and the Heathen one. If he that has two talents lays them out to advantage, he ſhall *receive a reward* as well as he that has five: and the one talent is as capable of a proportionable improvement as the two or the five. The *equality of God's ways* does not conſiſt in giving juſt the ſame number of gracious talents to all; but firſt in not deſiring to gather where he has not ſtrowed, or to reap above a proportion of his ſeed; and (2.) in graciously diſpenſing rewards according to the number of talents improved, and the degrees of that improvement: (and in juſtly inflicting puniſhments, according to the number of the talents bury'd) and the aggravations attending their unfaithfulneſs. *For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.*

We frequently ſpeak of God's ſecret decrees, the knowledge of which is as uſeleſs as it is uncertain; but

but seldom consider that solemn decree *so often* revealed in the gospel, *To him that has grace to purpose, more shall be given; and from him that has not, that has buried his gracious talent, and therefore in one sense has it not, shall be taken away even that which he hath to no purpose*: according to our Lord's awful command, *Take the talent from him that hath buried it, and give it to him that hath ten, for the good and faithful servant shall have abundance.*† He who says, *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*, is too just to look for an increase from those on whom he bestows no talent; and as he calls for repentance and faith, and for a daily increase of both, he has certainly bestowed upon us the seed of both, for he *gives seed to the sower, and does not desire to reap where he has not sown.*

Methinks my honored opponent cries out with amazement: What! have all men power to repent and believe? And in the mean time a Benedictine monk comes up to vouch that this doctrine is rank Pelagianism. But permit me to observe, that if Pelagius had acknowledged as we do the total fall of man, and ascribed with us to the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, all the power we have to repent and believe, none of the Fathers would have been so injudicious and uncharitable as to rank him among heretics. We maintain that altho' without Christ we can do nothing, yet so long as *the day of salvation* lasts, all men, *the chief of sinners* not excepted, can, thro' his free preventing grace, *cease to do evil, learn to do well*, and use those means which will infallibly end in the repentance, and faith peculiar to the dispensation they are under, whether it be that of the Heathens, Jews, or Christians.

If the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, and father Walsh deny this, they might as well charge Christ with

† I must do the Calvinists the justice to observe that as our Lord says, *ask and have*; so Elifra Coles says, *Use grace and have grace*, which is all that we contend for, if the inseparable counter-part of the axiom is admitted, "abuse grace and lose grace."

with the absurdity of *tasting death for every man*, in order to keep most men from the very possibility of being benefited by his death. They might as well assert that altho' *the free gift came upon ALL men*, yet it never came upon a vast majority of them; and openly maintain that Christ deserves to be called the *destroyer* rather than the *Saviour of the world*. For if the greatest part of mankind may be considered as *the world*, if repentance and faith are absolutely impossible to them, and Jesus came to denounce destruction to all who do not repent and believe, let every thinking man say whether he might not be called with greater propriety the *Destroyer* than the *Saviour of the world*; and whether preaching the Crispian gospel, is not like reading the warrant of *inevitable damnation* to millions of wretched creatures. But upon the scheme of what you call the "Weslean orthodoxy," *Christ is really the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe*: for he indulges all with a *day of salvation*, and if none but believers make a proper use of it, the fault is not in his partiality, but in their own obstinacy.

In what a pitiful light does your scheme place our Lord! Why did he *marvel at the unbelief of the Jews*, if they could no more believe than a stone can swim? And say not that he marvelled "as a man;" for the assertion absolutely *unmans* him. What *man* ever wondered that an ass does not bray with the nightingale's melodious voice? Nay, what *child* ever marvelled that the ox does not fly above the clouds with the soaring eagle?

The same observation holds with regard to repentance. Then he began, says St. Matthew, *to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, BECAUSE they repented not*. Merciful Saviour forgive us: We have insulted thy meek wisdom, by representing thee as cruelly upbraiding the lame for not running, the blind for not seeing, and the dumb for not speaking!

But this is not all, if Capernaum could not *have repented at our Lord's preaching*, as well as Nineveh at *the*

the preaching of Jonas; how do we reflect upon his mild equity, and adorable goodness, when we represent him as pronouncing woe upon woe over the impenitent city, and threatening to sink it into a deeper hell than Sodom *BECAUSE it repented not*! And how ill does it become us to exclaim against Deists for robbing Christ of his *divinity*, when we ourselves divest him of common *humanity*†.

Suppose a school-master said to his English scholars, "Except you instantly speak Greek you shall all be severely whipped," you would wonder at the injustice of the school-tyrant. But would not the wretch be merciful, in comparison of a Saviour, (so called) who is supposed to say to myriads of men that can no more repent than ice can burn, *Except you repent you shall all perish*? I confess that when I see real Protestants calling this doctrine "the pure gospel," and extolling it as "free grace," I no more wonder that real Papists should call their bloody inquisition *the house of mercy*, and their burning of those whom they call Heretics an *auto de fe*.

Obj. At this rate our salvation or damnation turns upon the good or bad use which we make of the manifold grace of God! And we are in this world in a state of probation, and not merely upon our passage to the rewards which everlasting love, or to the punishments which everlasting hatred has *freely* allotted us from the foundation of the world!

Ans. Undoubtedly: for what man of sense (I except those who thro' hurry and mistake have put on the veil of prejudice) could shew his face in a pulpit, to exhort a multitude of reprobates to avoid a damnation absolutely unavoidable; and invite a little flock of elect, to lose no time in *making sure* an election, surer than the pillars of heaven?

Again, who but a tyrant will make the life of his subjects turn upon a thing that is not at all at their option? When Nero was determined to put people to death, had he not humanity and honesty enough
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† An act of faith.

not to tantalize them with insulting offers of life? To whom did he ever say, "If thou pluckest one star from heaven thou shalt not die; but if thou failest in the attempt, the most dreadful and lingering torments shall punish thy obstinacy?" And shall I, shall my Christian brethren, represent the King of saints as guilty of ——— what my pen refuses to write, that which Nero himself was too merciful to contrive?

Obj. "You do not state the case fairly. If *all have sinned in Adam*, and the wages of sin is death, God did the reprobates no wrong when he condemned them to eternal torments, before they knew their right hand from their left; yea, before the foundation of the world."

Ans. The plausibility of this objection, heightened by *voluntary humility*, has misled thousands of pious souls; God give them understanding to weigh the following reflections. (1.) If an unconditional absolute decree of damnation passed upon the reprobates *BEFORE the foundation of the world*; it is absurd to account for the justice of such a decree, by appealing to a sin committed *AFTER the foundation of the world*.

(2.) If Adam sinned necessarily according to the *secret will* and *purpose of God*, as you intimate in your 4th letter, many do not see how he, much less his posterity, could justly be condemned to eternal torments for doing an iniquity which *God's hand and counsel determined before to be done*.

(3.) As we sinned only *feminally*, in Adam, if God had not intended our redemption, his goodness would have engaged him to destroy us *feminally*, by crushing the capital offender who contained us all: so there would have been a just proportion between the sin, and the punishment; for as we sinned in Adam without the least consciousness of *guilt*, so in him we should have been punished without the least consciousness of *pain*. This observation may be illustrated by an example. If I catch a mischievous animal, a viper for instance, I have undoubtedly a right to kill her, and destroy her dangerous brood if she is big with young. But if instead

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of dispatching her as soon as I can, I feed her on purpose to get many broods from her, and torment to death millions of her offspring, I can hardly pass for the good man who regards the life of a beast. Leaving to you the application of this simile, I ask : Do we honor God when we break the equal beams of his perfections ; when we blacken his goodness and mercy, in order to make his justice and greatness shine with exorbitant lustre ? If " a God all mercy is a God unjust," may not we say, according to the rule of proportion, that " a God all justice is a God unkind," and can never be he *whose mercy is over all his works* ?

(5.) But the moment we allow that the blessing of the second Adam is as general as the curse of the first : that God sets again life and death before every individual, and that he mercifully restores to all a capacity of *choosing life*, yea and of *having it one day more abundantly* than Adam himself had before the fall, we see his goodness and justice shine with equal radiance, when he spares guilty Adam to propagate the fallen race, that they may share the blessings of a *better covenant*. For, according to the Adamic law, judgment was by one sin to condemnation ; but the free gift of the gospel is of many offences to justification. For if thro' the offence of one the many be dead ; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many.

(6.) Rational and scriptural as the preceding observations are, we could spare them, and answer your objection thus : You think God may justly decree, that millions of his unborn creatures shall be vessels of wrath to all eternity, overflowing with the vengeance due to Adam's pre-ordained sin ; but you are not nearer the mark : for granting that he could do it as a just, good, and merciful God ; yet he cannot do it as the God of faithfulness and truth. His word and oath are gone forth together : Hear both. What mean ye that ye use this proverb ? " The fathers have eaten four grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge : " As I LIVE, says the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use
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this proverb. The soul that sinneth personally, it shall die eternally. Every one shall die for his own avoidable iniquity. Every man that eateth the sour grapes, when he might have eaten the sweet, his teeth shall justly be set on edge. When God has thus made oath of his equity and impartiality before mankind, it is rather bold to charge him with contriving Calvin's election, and setting up the Protestant Madonna, the great image before which a considerable part of the church continually falls down and worships.

O ye honest Shadrachs, who gaze upon it with admiration, see how some Calvinian doctors deify it, *Decreta Dei sunt ipse Deus, The decrees of God are God himself.* See Elisha Coles advancing at the head of thousands of his admirers, and hear how he exhorts them to worship: *Let us make election our all; our bread, water, munition of rocks, and whatever else we can suppose to want,* that is, Let us make the great image our God. Ye candid Meshechs, ye considerate Abednegos, follow not this mistaken multitude; before you cry with them, "*Great is the Diana of the Calvinist!*" walk once around the celebrated image: and I am persuaded that if you can make out *Free Grace* written in running hand upon her smiling face, you will see *FREE WRATH* written in black capitals upon her deformed back; and then, far from being angry at the liberty I take to expose her, you will wish speed to the *little stone* which I level at her *iron-clay feet*.

Think not, honored Sir, that I say about *free-wrath*, what I cannot possibly prove: for you help me yourself to a striking demonstration. I suppose you still upon your travels. You come to the borders of a great empire, and the first thing that strikes you, is a man in an easy carriage going with folded arms to take possession of an immense estate freely given him by the King of the country. As he flies along you just make out the motto of the royal chariot, in which he doses, *FREE REWARD*. Soon after you meet five of the kings carts, containing twenty wretches loaded with irons: and the motto of every cart is, *FREE PUNISHMENT*.

WISHMENT. You enquire into the meaning of this extraordinary proceſſion, and the ſheriff attending the execution answers: Know, curious ſtranger, that our Monarch is *absolute*; and to ſhew that *ſovereignty* is the prerogative of his imperial crown, and that he is *no reſpecter of perſons*, he diſtributes every day **FREE rewards and FREE puniſhments**, to a certain number of his ſubjects.—“What! without any regard to merit or demerit, by mere caprice!”—Not altogether ſo, for *he pitches upon the WORST of men, and chief of ſinners, and upon ſuch to CHOOSE*, for the ſubjects of his rewards: (Eliſha Coles, page 62) And that his puniſhments may do as much honor to *free ſovereign wrath*, as his bounty does to *free ſovereign grace*, he pitches upon thoſe that ſhall be executed, before they are born.—“What! have theſe poor creatures in chains done no harm?” O yes, ſays the ſheriff, the king contrived that their parents ſhould let them fall, and break their legs before they had any knowledge; when they came to years of diſcretion he commanded them to run a race with broken legs, and becauſe they cannot do it, I am going to ſee them quartered. Some of them beſides this have been obliged to fulfil the king’s *ſecret will*, and *bring about his purpoſes*; and they ſhall be burned in yonder deep valley called *Tophet*, for their trouble.—You are ſhocked at the ſheriff’s account, and begin to expoſtulate with him about the *freeneſs* of the *wrath* which burns a man for doing the king’s will; but all the answer you can get from him is that which you give me in your 4th letter, page 23, where ſpeaking of a poor reprobate you ſay, *Such an one is indeed accompliſhing the king’s, you ſay God’s decree, but he carries a dreadful mark in his forehead, that ſuch a decree is, that he ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord of the country.* You cry out, “God deliver me from the hands of a monarch, who puniſhes with everlaſting deſtruction ſuch as accompliſh his decree!” and while the magiſtrate intimates

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that your exclamation is *a dreadful mark* if not *in your forehead*, at least upon your tongue, that you yourself, shall be apprehended against the next execution, and made a public instance of the king's *free wrath*, your blood runs cold, you bid the postillion turn the horses; they gallop for your life, and the moment you get out of the dreary land, you bless God for your narrow escape.

May reason and scripture draw your soul with equal speed from the dismal fields of Cole's sovereignty, to the smiling plains of primitive Christianity. Here you have God's *election* without Calvin's *reprobation*. Here Christ chuses the Jews without rejecting the Gentiles, and elects Peter, James and John to the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, with-reprobating Matthew Thomas and Simon. Here no body is damned for not doing impossibilities, or for doing what he could not possibly help. Here all that are saved enjoy rewards thro' the merits of Christ, according to the degrees of evangelical obedience which the Lord enables, not forces, them to perform. Here *free wrath* never appeared; all our damnation is of ourselves, when we *neglect such great salvation*, by obstinately refusing to *work it out with fear and trembling*. But this is not all, here *free grace* does not rejoice over *stocks* but over *men*, who gladly confess that their salvation is all of God, who for Christ's sake rectifies their free-agency, helps their infirmities, and *works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. And from the tenor of the scripture, as well as from the consent of all nations, and the dictates of conscience, it appears that part of *God's good pleasure* towards man is, that he shall remain invested with the awful power of *chusing life or death*, that his will shall never be *forced*, and consequently that overbearing, irresistible grace shall be banished to the land of Cole's sovereignty, together with free, absolute, unavoidable wrath.

Now,

Now, honored Sir, permit me to ask, Why does this doctrine alarm good men? Why are those divines deemed heretics who dare not divest God of his essential love, Emmanuel of his compassionate humanity, and man of his connatural free-agency? What are Dominicus and Calvin, when weighed in the balance against Moses and Jesus Christ? Hear the great Prophet of the Jews: *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, heaven and hell, therefore chuse life that you may live.* And he that hath ears not yet absolutely stopped by prejudice, let him hear what the great prophet of the Christians says upon the important question. *I am come that they might have life—all things are now ready—but ye will not come unto me that you might have life—I would have gathered you and ye would not.—Because I have called and ye refused, I will laugh when your destruction cometh.* FOR THAT they did not CHUSE the fear of the Lord, THEREFORE shall they eat not the fruit of my decree or of Adam's sin, but of their own perverse way: *they shall be filled with their own doings.*

If these words of Moses and Jesus Christ are overlooked, should not at least the experience of near six thousand years teach the world that God does not force rational beings, and that when he tries their loyalty, he does not obey for them, but gives them sufficient grace to obey for themselves? Had not all the angels sufficient grace to obey? If some kept not their first estate, was it not thro' their own unfaithfulness? What evil has our Creator done us, or what service have devils rendered us, that we should fix the blot of Calvinian reprobation upon the former, to excuse the rebellion of the latter? Did not Adam and Eve stand some time by means of God's sufficient grace, and might they not have stood for ever? Have not unconverted men sufficient grace to forsake or complain of some evil? To perform, or attempt

some good? Had not David sufficient grace to avoid the crimes into which he plunged? Have not believers sufficient power to do more good than they do? And does not the scripture address sinners (Simon Magus not excepted) as having sufficient grace to pray for more grace, if they have not yet sinned the sin unto death?

In opposition to the above-stated doctrine of *grace free for all*, as well as, *free in all*, our Calvinian brethren assert that God binds his *free grace*, and keeps it from visiting millions of sinners whom they call reprobates.—They teach that man is not in a state of probation, that his lot is absolutely cast, a certain little number of souls being immoveably fixed in God's favor, in the midst of all their abominations; and a certain vast number under his eternal wrath, in the midst of their most sincere endeavours to secure his favor. And their teachers maintain that the names of the former were *written in the book of life*, without any respect to foreseen repentance, faith and obedience; while the names of the latter were put in the book of death, (so I call the decree of reprobation) merely for the sin of Adam, without any regard to personal impenitency, unbelief and disobedience. And this *narrow grace* and *free wrath* they recommend to the world under the engaging name of *free grace*.

This doctrine, dear Sir, we are in conscience bound to oppose, not only because it is the reverse of the other, which is both scriptural and rational; but because it is inseparably connected with doctrinal Antinomianism, as your fourth letter abundantly demonstrates; and above all, because it appears to us that it fixes a blot upon all the divine perfections. Please, honored, Sir, to consider the following queries.

What becomes of God's *goodness*, if the tokens of it which he gives to millions are only intended to
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inance their ruin, or cast a deceitful veil over his everlasting wrath?—What of his *mercy* which is over ALL his works, if millions were ever excluded from the least interest in it, by an *absolute* decree that constitutes them vessels of wrath from all eternity?—What becomes of his *justice*, if he sentences myriads upon myriads to everlasting fire, BECAUSE they have not believed on the name of his only begotten Son; when, if they had believed that he was their *Jesus*, their Saviour, they would have believed a monstrous lie, and claimed what they have no more right to than I have to the crown of England?—What of his *veracity*, and the oath he swears that he willeth not the death of a sinner; if he never affords most sinners sufficient means of escaping eternal death? If he sends his ambassadors to every creature, declaring that all things are now ready for their salvation, when nothing but *Tophet* is prepared of old for the inevitable destruction of a vast majority of them?—What becomes of his *holiness*, if in order to condemn the reprobates with some show of justice, and secure the end of his decree of reprobation, which is that “millions shall absolutely be damned,” he absolutely fixes the means of their damnation, that is, their sins and wickedness?—What of his *wisdom* if he seriously expostulates with souls as dead as corpses, and gravely urges to repentance and faith persons that can no more repent and believe, than fishes can speak and sing?—What becomes of his *long-suffering*, if he waits to have an opportunity of sending the reprobates into a deeper hell, and not to give them a longer time to save themselves from this perverse generation?—What of his *equity*, if there was mercy for Adam and Eve, who personally breaking the edge of duty; wantonly rushed out of paradise into this howling wilderness; and yet there is no mercy for millions of their unfortunate children, who are born in a state of sin and misery without any *personal* choice, and consequently without any *personal* sin?—And what becomes of his

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omniscience, if he cannot foreknow future contingencies? If to foretel without a mistake that such a thing shall happen, he must do it himself? Was not Nero as wise in this respect? Could not he foretel that Phebe should not continue a virgin, when he was bent upon ravishing her? That Seneca should not die a natural death, when he had determined to have him murdered? And that Crispus should fall into a pit, if he obliged him to run a race at midnight in a place full of pits? And what old woman in the kingdom cannot precisely foretel that a silly tale shall be told at such an hour, if she is resolved to tell it herself, or at any rate to engage a child to do it for her?

Again, What becomes of God's *loving-kindnesses*, which have been ever of old towards the children of men? And what of his *impartiality*, if most men, absolutely reprobated for the sin of Adam, are never placed in a state of personal trial and probation? Does not God use them far less kindly than devils, who were tried every one for himself, and remain in their diabolical state, because they brought it upon themselves by a *personal* choice? Astonishing! That the Son of God should have been flesh of the flesh, and bone of the bone of millions of men, whom, upon the Calvinian scheme, he never indulged so far as he did devils! What an hard hearted relation to myriads of his fellow-men, does Calvin represent our Lord? Suppose Satan had become our *kinsman* by incarnation, and had by that mean got *the right of redemption*: would he not have acted like himself, if he had not only left the majority of them in the depth of the fall, but enhanced their misery by the sight of his partiality to the little flock of the elect?

Once more. What becomes of *fair dealing*, if God every where represents sin as the dreadful evil which causes damnation, and yet the most horrid sins *work for good* to some, and as you intimate "accomplish their salvation thro' Christ?"—And what of *honesty*, if the God of truth himself promises that *all*
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the families of the earth shall be blessed in Christ, when he has cursed a vast majority of them, with a decree of absolute reprobation, which excludes them from obtaining an interest in him, even from the foundation of the world?

Nay what becomes of his *sovereignty* itself, if it is torn from the mild and gracious attributes by which it is tempered? If it is held forth in such a light as renders it more terrible to millions, than the sovereignty of Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura appeared to Daniel's companions, when *the form of his visage was changed against them*, and he decreed that they should be *cast into the burning fiery furnace*; for they might have saved their bodily life by bowing to the golden image which was a thing in their power; but poor reprobates can escape at no rate: the *horrible decree* is gone forth; they must, in spite of their best endeavours, dwell body and soul with *everlasting burnings*.

And let none say that we wrong the Calvinian decree of reprobation, when we call it an *horrible decree*, for Calvin himself is honest enough to call it so. 'Un-
' *de factum est, tot gentes, unà cum liberis eorum*
' *infantibus æternæ morti involveret lapsus Adæ*
' *absque remedio, nisi quia Deo ita visum est?—Decre-*
' *tum quidem horribile, fateor: inficiare tamen nemo*
' *poterit, quin præsciverit Deus quem exitum habi-*
' *turus esset homo, antequam ipsum conderet, et*
' *ideo præsciverit quia decreto suo sic ordinarat.*' That is, 'How comes it to pass that so many nations, together with their infant children, are by the fall of Adam involved in eternal death without remedy, unless it is because God would have it so?—*An horrible decree*, I confess! Nevertheless no-body can deny that God foreknew what would be man's end before he created him, and that he foreknew it because he had ordered it by his decree.' Calv. Inst. Book 3. Chap. 23. Sect. 7.

This is some of the contempt which Calvinism pours upon God's perfections: these are some of the
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blots which it fixes upon his word.—But the moment man is considered as a candidate for heaven, a probationer for a blissful immortality—the moment you allow him what *free grace* bestows upon him, that is, *a day of salvation*, with a *talent* of living light and rectified free-agency, to enable him to *work for life* faithfully promised, as well as *from life* freely imparted—the moment I say, you allow this, all the divine perfections shine with un sullied lustre; and as reason and majesty returned to Nebuchadnezzar after his shameful degradation, so consistency and native dignity are restored to the abused oracles of God.

Having thus shewn the inconsistency of Calvinism, and the reasonableness of what you call the Weslean, and what we esteem the Christian orthodoxy, (so far at least as it respects the gracious power and opportunity that man, as redeemed and prevented by Christ, has to “work for life” or to *work out his own salvation*) it is but just I should consider some of the most plausible objections which are urged against our doctrine.

1. Obj. Your Weslean scheme pours more contempt upon the divine perfections than ours. What becomes of God’s *wisdom*, if he gave his Son to die for all mankind, when he foreknew that most men would never be benefited by his death?

Ans. (1.) God foreknew just the contrary: all men, even those who perish, are benefited by Christ’s death; for all enjoy thro’ him a *day of salvation*, and a thousand blessings both spiritual and temporal; and if all do not enjoy heaven for ever, they may still thank God for his gracious offer, and take the blame upon themselves for their obstinate refusal of it. (2.) God by reinstating all mankind in a state of probation, for ever shuts the mouth of those who *chuse death in the error of their ways*, and clears himself of their blood before men and angels. If he cannot eternally benefit unbelievers, he eternally vindicates his own adorable perfections. He can
say

ay to the most obstinate of all the reprobates, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; In me was thy help, but thou wouldest not come unto me that thou mightest have life.* Thy destruction is not from my decree, but *thine own determination.*

2. Obj. If God wills *all men to be saved*, and yet many are damned, is he not disappointed? And does not his disappointment argue that he wants either wisdom to contrive the means of some men's salvation, or power to execute his gracious design?

Ans. (1.) God's purpose is that all men shall have sufficient grace to believe according to their dispensation, that *he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned.* God cannot therefore be disappointed, even when man's free agency throws in the weight of final unbelief, and turns the scale of probation for death. (2.) Altho' Christ is the author of *a day of salvation* to all, yet he is *the author of eternal salvation* to none but to such as *obey him, by working out their own salvation while it is day.*

If you say that "Supposing God wills the salvation of *all*, and none can be saved but the *obedient*, he should make *all* obey:" I reply, So he does, by a variety of gracious means, which persuade but do not force them; for he says himself, *What could I have done more to my vineyard than I have done?* "Oh but he should force all by the sovereign power of irresistible grace." You might as well say that he should renounce his wisdom, and defeat his own purpose: for if his wisdom places men in a state of probation; the moment he forces them, he takes them out of that state and overturns his own counsel: he destroys the work of his hands; he unmans man, and saves him not as a rational creature; but as a stock or stone. Add to this, that *forced obedience* is a contradiction in terms; it is but another word for *disobedience*, at least in the account of him who says, *My son, give me thy heart: obey me with an unconstrained, free, and chearful will.* In a word, this
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many are willingly ignorant of, that when God says, he wills all MEN to be saved, he wills them to be saved as MEN, according to his own method of salvation laid down in the above-mentioned scriptures, and not in their own way of wilful disobedience, or after Calvin's scheme of irresistible grace.

3. Obj. " You may speak against *irresistible* grace, but we are persuaded that nothing short of it is sufficient to make us believe ; for St. John informs us that the Jews, towards whom it was not exerted, COULD not believe."

Ans. (1.) Joseph said to his mistress *How CAN I do this great wickedness !* But this does not prove that he was not able to comply with her request if he had been so minded. The truth was, that some of the Pharisees had *bury'd their talent*, and therefore could not improve it; while others had so provoked God, that he had *taken it from them* : they had *sinned unto death*. But most of them obstinately held that evil, which was an insurmountable hindrance to faith ; and to them our Lord said, *How CAN ye believe, who receive honor one of another !* (2.) I wonder that modern predestinarians should make so much of this scripture, when St. Augustin their father, solves the seeming difficulty with the utmost readiness. ' If you ask me, says he, why the Jews COULD not believe : I quickly answer, Because they WOULD not ; for God foresaw their evil will, and foretold it by the prophet ; and if he blinded their eyes, their own wills deserved this also.' They obstinately said " we will not see," and God justly said at last, " Ye shall not see."

4. Obj. You frequently mention the parable of the *talents*, but take care to say nothing of the parable of the *dry bones*, which shews not only the absurdity of supposing that man can work for life, but the propriety of expostulating with souls as void of all spiritual life, as the *dry bones* to which Ezekiel prophesied.

Ans.

Ans. If you read that parable without comment, you will see that it is not descriptive of the spiritual state of souls, but of the political condition of the Jews during their captivity in Babylon. They were scattered throughout Chaldea as *dry bones in a valley*; nor was there any human probability of their being collected to form again a political body. Therefore God to cheer their desponding hearts, favoured Ezekiel with the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones. (2.) This vision proves just the reverse of what some imagine. For the dry bones are thus described by God himself. *These bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, (this was the language of their despairing minds) our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.* Here these Israelites compared to dry bones, even before Ezekiel prophesied, and the Spirit entered into them, knew their misery, and complained of it saying, *Our bones are dried up.* How far then were they from being as insensible as corpses? (3.) The prophecy to the dry bones did not consist in threatnings and exhortations; it was only of the declarative kind. Nor was the promise of their resurrection fulfilled in the Calvinian way, that is *irresistibly*. For altho' God had said, *I will open your graves, that is, your prisons, and bring you out of them into your own land*; we find that multitudes when their graves were opened, chose to continue in them. For when Nehemiah and Ezra breathed, under God, courage into the dry bones, the Jewish captives dispersed throughout Chaldea, many preferred the land of their captivity to their own land, land refused to return: so that after all, their political resurrection turned upon their own choice.

5. Obj. We do not altogether go by the parable of the dry bones, when we affirm there is no absurdity in preaching to souls as dead as corpses. We have the example of our Lord as well as that of Ezekiel. Did he not say to Lazarus when he was dead and buried, *Come forth*?

Ans.

Ans. If Christ had called Lazarus out of the grave without giving him power to come forth, his friends would have had some reason to suspect that *he was besides himself*. How much more, if they had heard him call a thousand corpses out of their graves, denouncing to all, that if they did not rise they should be *cast into a lake of fire*, and eaten up by a *worm that dieth not* ! It is matter of fact that Christ never commanded but one dead man to come out of the grave ; and the instant he gave him the command, he gave him also power to obey it. Hence we conclude that as the Lord *commands all men every where to repent*, he gives them all power so to do. But some Calvinist's argue just the reverse. Christ, say they, called one corpse without using any intreaty, threatening or promise, and he gave it power to obey ; therefore when he calls an hundred dead souls, and inforces his call with the greatest variety of expostulations, threatenings and promises, he gives power to obey only to two or three. What an inference is this ! How worthy of the cause which it supports !

In how contemptible a light does our Lord appear if he says to souls as dead as Lazarus in the grave, *All the day long have I stretched out my hands unto you. Turn ye : Why will ye die ? Let the wicked forsake his way, and I will have mercy upon him : But if he will not turn, I will whet my sword, I have bent my bow and made it ready ; I have also prepared for him the instruments of death ?*

I once saw a passionate man unmercifully beating and damning a blind horse, because he did not take to the way in which he would have him go ; and I came up just when the poor animal fell a lamed victim to its driver's madness. How did I upbraid him with his cruelty, and charge him with unparalleled extravagance ! But I now ask if it is not more than paralleled by the conduct of the imaginary being, whom some recommend to the world as a wise and merciful God. For the besotted driver for some minutes

nutes expostulated in his way with a *living* tho' blind horse; but the supposed Maker of the Calvinian decrees expostulates *all the day long* with souls not only as blind as beetles, but as *dead* as corpses. Again, the former had some hopes of prevailing with his living beast to turn; but what hopes can the latter have to prevail with dead corpses, or with souls as dead as they? What man in his senses ever attempted to make a corpse *turn*, by threatening it *sword in hand*; or by *bending the bow* and levelling an arrow at its cold and putrid heart?

But suppose the resurrection of Lazarus, and that of the dry bones, did not overthrow Calvinism, would it be reasonable to lay so much stress upon them? Is a dead soul in every respect like a dead body; and is *moral* absolutely like *natural* death? Can a parabolical vision wrested from its obvious meaning, supersede the plainest declarations of Christ, who personally addresses sinners as free agents? Should not metaphors, comparisons, and parables be suffered to walk erect like reasonable man? Is it right to make them go upon all four like the stupid ox? What loads of heterodoxy have degraded parables brought into the church! And how successfully has error carried on her trade, by dealing in figurative expressions taken in a literal sense!

This is my body, says Christ. "Therefore bread is flesh," says the Papist, and transubstantiation is true.—*These dry bones are the house of Israel*, says the Lord. "Therefore Calvinism is true," say my objector, and we can do no more towards our conversion, than dry bones towards their resurrection.—*Lost sinners* are represented in the gospel as a *lost piece of silver*: Therefore, says the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, they can no more seek God, than the piece could seek the woman who had lost it.—*Christ is the Son of God*, says St. Peter: "Therefore," says Arius, he is not coeternal with the Father, for I am not so old as my parents."

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And I, who have a right to be as wise as any of them, hearing our Lord say that *the seven churches are seven candlesticks*, prove by it that the seven churches can no more repent than three pair and half of candlesticks, or if you please, seven pair of snuffers. And shall we pretend to overthrow the general tenor of the scripture by such conclusions as these! Shall not rather unprejudiced persons of every denomination, agree to turn such arguments out of the Christian church, with as much indignation as Christ turned the oxen out of the Jewish temple!

Permit me honored Sir, to give you two or three instances more, of an undue stretching of some particular words, for the support of some Calvinian errors. According to the oriental stile a follower of wisdom is called a *son of wisdom*, and one that deviates from her paths as *son of folly*. By the same mode of speech, a wicked man, considered as wicked, is called *Satan, a son of Belial, a child of the wicked one, and a child of the devil*. On the other hand a man who turns from the devil's works, and does the works of God by believing in him, is called a *child, or a son of God*. Hence the passing from the ways of Satan to the ways of God, was naturally called *conversion and new birth*, as implying a turning from sin, a passing into the family of God, and being numbered among the godly.

Hence some divines, who, like Nicodemus, carnalize the expressions of *new birth, child of God, and son of God*, assert that if men who once walked in God's ways, turn back even into adultery, murder and incest, they are still *God's dear people and pleasant children*, in the gospel-sense of the words. They ask, "Can a man be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? Can he be born this week, and unborn the next?" And with these questions they as much think they have overthrown the doctrine of holiness and one half of the bible, as honest Nicodemus supposed he had demolished

lished the doctrine of regeneration, and stopped our Lord's mouth, when he said, *Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?*

The questions of our brethren would be easily answered, if setting aside the oriental mode of speech, they simply asked, "May one who has *ceased to do evil, and learned to do well* to-day; cease to do well, and learn to do evil to-morrow?" To this we could directly reply: If the dying thief, the Philippian jailor, and multitudes of Jews, in one day went over from the sons of folly to the sons of wisdom; where is the absurdity of saying they could measure the same way back again in one day; and draw back into the horrid womb of sin as easily as Satan drew back into rebellion, Adam into disobedience, David into adultery, Solomon into idolatry, Judas into treason, and Ananias and Sapphira into covetousness? When Peter had shewn himself a *blest* son of heavenly wisdom, by confessing Jesus Christ; did he even stay till the next day to become a son of folly by following the *wisdom which is earthly, sensual and devilish*? Was not our Lord directly obliged to rebuke him with the utmost severity, by saying, *Get thee behind me, SATAN?*

Multitudes, who live in open sin, build their hopes of heaven upon a similar mistake, I mean upon the unscriptural idea which they fix to the scriptural word *sheep*. "Once I *heard the shepherd's voice*, says one of these Laodicean souls; I *followed him*, and therefore I was one of his *sheep*; and now, tho' I *follow the voice of a stranger* who leads me into all manner of sins, into adultery and murder, I am undoubtedly a *sheep* still; for it was never heard that a *sheep* became a goat." Such persons do not observe, that our Lord calls *sheep* those who *hear his voice*, and *goats* those who follow that of the tempter. Nor do they consider that if Saul, a *grievous wolf breathing slaughter* against Christ's *sheep*, and *making havock of his little flock*, could in a short time be chang-

ed both into a sheep and a shepherd; David, an harmless sheep, could in as short a time commence a goat with Bathsheba, and prove a wolf in sheep's clothing to her husband.

Pardon me, honoured Sir, if to make my mistaken brethren ashamed of their argument, I dedicate to them the following soliloquy, wherein I reason upon their own plan. 'Those very Jews whom the baptist and our Lord call'd *a brood of vipers, and serpents*, were soon after compared to *chicken*, which Christ wanted to *gather as a hen does her brood*. What a wonderful change was here! The vipers became chickens! Now as it was never heard that chickens became vipers, I conclude that those Jews, even when they came about our Lord like *fat bulls of Basan*, like *ramping and roaring lions*, were true chickens still. And indeed why should not they have been as true *chickens*, as David was a true *sheep* when he murdered Uriah? I abhor the doctrine which maintains that a man may be a chick or a sheep to-day, and a viper or a goat to-morrow.'

'But I am a little embarrass'd. If none go to hell but goats, and none to heaven but *sheep*, where shall the *chickens* go? Where the *wolves in sheep's cloathing*? And in what limbus of heaven or hell shall we put that *fox Herod*, the *dogs who return to their vomit*, and the *swine*, before whom we must *not cast our pearls*? Are they all species of goats, or some particular kind of sheep?

'My difficulties increase. The church is call'd a *dove*, and Ephraim a *filly dove*? Shall the *filly dove* be admitted among the *sheep*? Her case seems rather doubtful. The hair of the spouse in the canticles is likewise said to be like a *flock of goats*, and Christ's shepherds are represented as *feeding kids*, or *young goats besides their tents*. I wonder if those *young goats* became young sheep, or if they were all doom'd to continue reprobates! But what puzzles me most, is that the Babylonians are in the same
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‘verse compar’d to *lambs, rams, and goats*: Were they mongrel cleft, or mongrel reprobates, or some of Elisha Cole’s *spiritual monsters, in whom the spirit had begotten a lump of dead flesh?*’

I make this ridiculous soliloquy to shew the absurdity and danger of resting weighty doctrines upon so sandy a foundation as the particular sense which some good men give to a few scriptural expressions stretch’d and abus’d on the rack of my countryman Calvin; especially such expressions as these, a *child of God, a sheep, a goat*, and above all, the *dead in sin*.

Upon this last expression you seem, honoured Sir, chiefly to place the merit of your cause with respect to “working for life”; witness the following words: “That we are to work for life is an assertion most exceedingly self-contradictory, if it be a truth that man is *dead in trespasses and sins*.” Had you given yourself the trouble of reading with any degree of attention the 42d page of the vindication, you would have seen your difficulty propos’d and solv’d: Witness the following words which conclude the solution: “In this scriptural view of free grace, what room is there for the ridiculous cavil, that Mr. W. wants the dead to work for life.” Had I been in your place I confess, honoured Sir, I could not have produc’d that cavil again, without attempting at least to wipe off the ridicule put upon it. I should think truth has better weapons to defend herself than a *vail*. I grant that the reverend Divine whose second you are, has publickly *cast a vail over all my arguments*, under the name of *mistakes*: but could you possibly think that his vail was thick enough to cover them from the eyes of unprejudic’d readers, and palliate your answering, or seeming to answer me without taking notice of my arguments? But if you cast a vail over them, I shall now endeavour to do your’s justice and clear the matter a little farther.

I. Availing yourself of St. Paul’s words to the Ephesians and Colossians, *You hath he quicken’d, who*

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were dead in trespasses and sins, and you being dead in your sins hath he quicken'd together with him; you dwell upon the absurdity of "expecting living actions from a dead corpse," or living works from a dead soul.

(1) I wonder at the partiality of some persons. If we assert that strong believers are DEAD *to sin*, they tell us very properly that such are not so dead but they may commit sin if they please, or if they are off their watch: But if we say that many who are DEAD *in sin*, are not so dead but in the strength imparted together with *the light that enlightens every man*, they may leave off some of their sins if they please, we are exclaim'd against as using metaphysical distinctions, and dead must absolutely mean impotent as a corpse.

(2.) The word *dead* &c. is frequently used in the scriptures to denote a particular degree of helplessness and inactivity very short of the total helplessness of a corpse. We read of the DEADNESS of Sarah's womb; and of Abraham's body being DEAD, and he must be a strong Calvinist indeed, who, from such expressions, peremptorily asserts, that Sarah's DEAD womb was as unfit for conception, and Abraham's DEAD body for generation, as if they both had been "DEAD corpses." Christ writes to the church of Sardis, *I know thy works; thou hast a name to live, and art DEAD*: but it is evident that *dead* as they were, something remained alive in them, tho', like the smoking flax, it was ready to die: Witness the words that follow, *be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*. Now Sir, if the dead Sardians could "work for life," by strengthening the things belonging to the Christian which remained in them; is it modest to decide *ex cathedra*, that the dead Ephesians and Colossians could not as well work for life by strengthening the things that remained and were ready to die under THEIR OWN dispensation? Is it not evident that a beam of the light of the world still shone in their hearts, or that the Spirit still strove with them? If they had absolutely quenched him, would he have helped them to believe? And if they had not, was not there something

something of the light which enlightens every man remaining in them; with which they both could, and did work for life, as well as the dead Sardians?

(3.) The absurdity of always measuring the meaning of the word *dead* by the idea of a *dead corpse*, appears from several other scriptures. St. Paul speaking of one who grows wanton against Christ, says, *she that liveth in pleasure is DEAD while she liveth*. Now if this means that she is entirely devoid of every degree of spiritual life, what becomes of Calvinism? Suppose all that *live in pleasure* are as *dead to God* as corpses; what became of the *everlasting life* of Lot, when he *liv'd in pleasure* with his daughters? Of David with Bathsheba, and Solomon with his idolatrous wives? When the same apostle observes to the Romans that their *body was DEAD because of sin*, did he really mean they were already *dead corpses*? And when he adds, *sin revived and I DIED*, did Calvinian death really pass upon him? Dead as he was, could not he complain like the *dry bones*, and ask, *who shall deliver me from this body of death*? Again, when our Lord says to Martha, *he that BELIEVETH in me, tho' he were DEAD yet shall he LIVE*, does he not intimate that there is a work consistent with the degree of death of which he speaks? A believing out of death into life? A doing the work of God for life, yea for eternal life?

(4.) From these and the like scriptures it is evident that there are different degrees of spiritual death, which you perpetually confound. (1.) Total death, or a full departure of the Holy Spirit. This pass'd upon Adam, and all mankind in him, when he lost God's moral image, fell into selfish nature, and was buried in sin, guilt, shame, and horror. (2.) Death freely visited with a seed of life in our fallen representative, and of course in all his posterity, during the day of their visitation. (3.) Death oppressing this living seed, and *holding it in unrighteousness*, which was the death of the Ephesians and Colossians. (4.)
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Death prevailing again over the living seed, after it had been *powerfully quickened*, and burying it in sin and wickedness. This was the death of David during his apostacy, and is still that of all who once believed, but now *live in Laodicean ease or Sardian pleasure*. And (5.) the death of confirmed apostates, who, by absolutely *quenching the spirit of life in Christ Jesus* the 2d Adam, are fallen into the miserable state of nature and total helplessness in which the first Adam was, when God preached to him the gospel of his quickening grace. These are said by St. James to be *twice dead*; *dead* by Adam's total apostacy from God, and *dead* by their own personal and final apostacy from the *light of the world*.

II. The foundation of the *Crispian Babel* is literally laid in *confusion*. When you have confounded all the degrees of spiritual death, we may naturally expect to see you confound all the degrees of spiritual life, which our Lord meant when he said, *I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*. "All that are quickened, do you say, are *"pardoned and justified."* As if a man could not be *quickened* to see his sins and reform, before he is *quickened* so to believe in Christ as to receive the pardon and justification mentioned Col. ii. 13, and Rom. v. 1.

If you read the scriptures without prejudice, you will see that there are several degrees of spiritual life or quickening power. (1.) The living *light* which *shines in the darkness* of every man, during the day of his visitation. (2.) The life of the returning sinner, whether he has always lived in open sin as the publican, or once walked in the ways of God as David. (3.) The life of the heathen, who like Cornelius *fears God and works righteousness* according to his light, and is accepted in his dispensation. (4.) The life of the pious Jew, who like Samuel *fears God from his youth*. This degree of life is far superior to the preceding, being cherished by the traditions of the patriarchs

archs; the books of the old testament, the sacraments, priests, prophets, temple, sabbaths, sacrifices, and other means of grace belonging to the Jewish economy. (5.) The life of the feeble Christian or disciple of John, who is *baptized with water unto repentance for the remission of sins*, and believing in the *Lamb of God* immediately pointed out to him enjoys the blessings of the primitive Christians before the day of Pentecost. And (6.) The still more abundant life, the life of the adult or perfect Christian, imparted to him when the love of God, or power from on high, is plentifully shed abroad in his believing soul, on the day that *Christ baptizes him with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, to *sanctify him wholly and seal him unto the day of redemption*.

III. When you have overlooked all the degrees of spiritual death and life, what wonder is it that you should confound all the degrees of *acceptance* and *divine favor*, with which God blesses the children of men. Permit me honored Sir to bring also this article of the Christian faith out of the Calvinian tower of Babel, where it has too long been detained.

(1.) I have already proved, that, in consequence of the love of benevolence and pity, with which *God loved the world*, and through the *propitiation which Christ made for the sins of the whole world*, the *free gift of an accepted time and a day of salvation came upon all men*. In this sense they are all *accepted*, and sent to *work in the vineyard* of their respective dispensations. This degree of acceptance, with the seed of light, life and power that accompanies it, is certainly previous to any work; and in virtue of it infants and compleat idiots go to heaven, *for of such is the kingdom of God*. As they are not capable of burying or improving their talent of inferior acceptance, they are admitted with it to an inferior degree of glory.

(2.) While many abandoned Heathens, and those who follow their abominable ways bury their talent to the last, and lose it together with the degree of acceptance, they once enjoyed in or through the *Be-*
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loved; some, by improving it, are accepted in an higher manner, and like Cornelius receive tokens of increasing favor. The love of pity and benevolence which God bore them, is now mixed with some love of complacence and delight.

(3.) Faithful Jews, or those who are under their dispensation, improving a superior number of talents, are accepted in a superior manner, and as a token of it they are made *rulers over five cities*, they partake of greater grace here, and greater glory hereafter.

(4.) John the Baptist and his disciples, I mean, Christians who have not yet been baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, are yet more highly accepted; for John, and the souls who live up to the height of his dispensation, are *great in the sight and favor of the Lord*. They exceed all those who attain only to the perfection of inferior œconomies.

(5.) But those Christians, who live in the kingdom of God, which was opened to believers on the day of pentecost, whose heart burns with his love, and flames with his glory, are accepted in a still higher degree; for our Lord informs us, that great as John himself was, *the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he*, and as a token of superior acceptance he shall be made *ruler over ten cities*: he shall enter more deeply into the joy and glory of his Lord.

Altho' concurrence with grace given, is necessary in order to these four last degrees of acceptance, none enjoys them but *in and thro' the beloved*; for as his blood is the meritorious spring of all our pardons, so his Spirit is the inexhaustible fountain of all our graces. Nor are we less indebted to him for power to be *workers together with God* in the great business of our salvation, than for all the other wonders of his unmerited goodness and redeeming love.

Let no body say that the doctrine of these degrees of acceptance is founded upon metaphysical distinctions, and exceeds the capacity of simple Christians; for a child ten years old understands that he may be
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accepted to run a race, before he is accepted to receive the prize ; and that a man may be accepted as a *day-labourer*, and not as a *servant* ; be as a *steward*, and not as a *child*, as a *friend* and not as a *spouse*. All these degrees of *acceptance* are very distinct, and the confusion of them evidently belongs to the Calvinian Babel.

IV. As we have considered three of the walls of your tower ; it will not be amiss to cast a look upon the fourth, which is the utterly confounding of the four degrees that make up a glorified saint's *eternal justification*. (1.) That which passes upon all infants universally, and is thus described by St. Paul, *As by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon ALL men, unto present justification from original sin, and future justification of life upon their repenting, and believing in the light, during the day of their visitation*. In consequence of this degree of justification we may, without impeaching the veracity of God, say to every creature, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, to reconcile them unto himself, not imputing to them original sin unto eternal death, and blotting out their personal transgressions in the moment they believe with the heart unto righteousness*.

(2.) The justification consequent upon such believing, is thus described by St. Paul. *This blessing of faith imputed for righteousness shall be ours, if we believe on him that was raised from the dead for our justification.—We have believed in Jesus Christ ; that we might be JUSTIFIED by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.—Therefore being JUSTIFIED by faith we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

(3.) The justification consequent upon bringing forth the fruit of a lively faith in the truths that belong to our dispensation ; this justification is thus mentioned by St. James. *Rahab the harlot was justified by works.—Abraham our father was justified by works.*

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—Ye see then how by works a man is justified and not by faith only.

And (4.) final justification thus asserted by our Lord and St. Paul. *In the day of judgment by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned. Circumcision and uncircumcision avail nothing, but the keeping of the commandments, for the doers of the law shall be justified.*†

All these degrees of justification are equally merited by Christ. We do nothing in order to the first, because it finds us in a state of total death. Towards the second we believe by the power freely given us in the first, and by the additional help of Christ's word and the Spirit's agency. *We work by faith* in order to the third. And *we continue believing in Christ and working together with God*, as we have opportunity, in order to the fourth.

The preaching distinctly these four degrees of a glorified saint's eternal justification is attended with peculiar advantages. The first justification engages the sinner's attention, encourages his hope, and draws his heart by love. —The second wounds the self-righteous Pharisee, who works without believing, while it binds up the heart of the returning publican, who has no plea but *God be merciful to me a sinner*. —The third detects the hypocrisy and blasts the vain hopes of all Antinomians, who instead of shewing their faith by their works, *deny in works the Lord that*

† These four degrees of a glorified saint's eternal justification are mentioned in the preceding Checks, tho' not so distinctly as they are here. If treating of our present justification by faith, and of justification by works in the day of judgment, I have called them our "first and second justification," it was not to exclude the other two, but to attack gradually reigning prejudice, and accommodate myself to the language of my honored opponent, who called *justification in the day of judgment a second justification*. I should have been more exact at first; but I was so intent in demonstrating the thing, that I did not think then of contending for the most proper name. Nor did I see then of what importance it is, to drag the monster error out of the den of confusion in which he hides himself.

~~that~~ *bought them, and put him to an open shame.*—And while the fourth makes even a *Felix tremble*, it causes believers to pass the time of their sojourning here in humble fear and chearful watchfulness.

Tho' all these degrees of justification meet in glorified saints, we offer violence to scripture if we think with Dr. Crisp that they are inseparable. For all the wicked who *quench the convincing Spirit*, and are finally *given up to a reprobate mind*, fall from the first, as well as Pharaoh. All who *receive the seed among thorns*, all who do not forgive their fellow servants, all who *begin in the spirit and end in the flesh*; and all who *draw back* and become *sons or daughters of perdition*, by falling from the third, lose the second, as Hymeneus, Philetus, and Demas. And none partake of the fourth but those who bear fruit unto perfection according to one or another of the divine dispensations; some producing *thirty-fold* like Heathens, *some sixty-fold* like Jews, and *some an hundred fold* like Christians.

From the whole it appears that altho' we can absolutely do nothing towards our first justification, yet to say that neither faith nor works are required in order to the other three, is one of the boldest, most unscriptural, and most dangerous assertions in the world; which sets aside the best half of the scriptures, and lets gross Antinomianism, come in full tide upon the church.

Having thus taken a view of the confusion in which Calvin and Crisp have laid the foundation of their schemes, I return to the arguments by which you support their mistakes.

I. "If you suppose, do you say, that there are any conditional works before justification, these works must either be the works of one who is in a state of nature, or in a state of grace, either condemned by the law or absolved by the gospel."

A new sophism this! No works are previous to justification from original sin, and to the quickning

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light which enlightens every man that comes into the world. And the works that a penitent does in order to the subsequent justifications, such as ceasing to do evil, learning to do well, repenting, believing, and persevering in obedient faith, are all done in a state of initial, progressive, or perfected grace; not under the Adamic law which did not admit of repentance, but under the gospel of Christ which says, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord who will abundantly pardon his sins, cleanse him from all unrighteousness, and even fill him with the fulness of God.*

II. You proceed: if a man in a state of nature does works in order to justification, they "cannot please God because he is in a state of utter enmity against him." What Sir, do you think, that a man "in a state of utter enmity against God" will do any thing in order to recover his favour? When Adam was in that state, did he so much as once ask pardon? If he had, would he not have evidenced a desire of reconciliation, and consequently a degree of apostacy short of what you call *utter enmity*?

III. You quote scripture: "He that does something in order to justification cannot please God, *because he is alienated from the life of God, thro' the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart.*" An unhappy quotation this: for the apostle did not speak these words of those honest Heathens, who, in obedience to the *light of the world*, did something in order to justification; but of those abandoned Pagans, who, as he observes in the next verse, *being past feeling, had given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* This is to prove that men have not a talent of power to *work the works of God*, you produce men who have buried it, that they might *work all uncleanness* without control, *yea with greediness.*

You would have avoided this mistake, if you had considered that the Heathens mentioned there by St. Paul,

Paul, were of the stamp of those whom he describes, Rom. 1. and whom he represents as *given up by God to a reprobate mind*. BECAUSE *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, and did not like to retain him in their knowledge*. Here we may observe (1.) that those reprobate Heathens had once some knowledge of God, and of course some life; for *this is eternal life to know God*. (2.) That if they were given up, BECAUSE they did not use that talent of *divine knowledge*; it was not *because* they were eternally and unconditionally reprobated; whence I beg leave to conclude, that if eternal unconditional reprobation is a mere chimera, so is likewise eternal unconditional election.

You might have objected with much more plausibility, that *when the Ephesians were in the flesh they were without hope, without Christ, and without God in the world*: And if you had, I would have replied that these words cannot be taken in their full latitude, for the following reasons, which appear to me unanswerable. (1.) The Ephesians before their conversion were not totally *without hope*, but *without a good hope*. They probably had a presumptuous a hope as David in Uriah's bed, or Agag when he thought the bitterness of death was past. (2.) They *were without Christ*, just as a man who has buried his talent is without it. But as he may dig it up, and use it, if he sees his folly in time; so could, and so did the Ephesians. (3.) If they were in every sense *without Christ*, what becomes of the doctrine maintained in your fourth letter, that they "were for ever and for ever *compleat in Christ*?" (4.) They were not entirely *without God*; for *in him they lived, moved, and had their being*; nor were they without him as absolute reprobates, for they *knew the day of their visitation* before it was over. It remains then that they were *without God*, as the prodigal son was without his father, when he *fed swine in the far country*; and that they could and did return to their heavenly Father as well as he.

IV, You go on: "He who does something in order to justification, not being grafted in Christ the true vine, cannot bring forth any good fruit; he can do nothing at all." I beg, Sir, you would produce one man, who has not *finned the sin unto death*, that can absolutely do nothing, that cannot cease from one sin, and take up the practice of one duty. You will as soon find a saint in hell as such a man upon earth. Even those who in their *voluntary humility* say perpetually, that "they can do nothing," refute their own doctrine by their very confessions; for he who confesses his helplessness, undoubtedly does something, unless by some new rule in logic it can be demonstrated, that confessing our impotence, and complaining of our misery, is "doing nothing."

When our Lord says, *Without me ye can do nothing*, does he say that we are totally without him? When he declares that *no man cometh unto him unless the Father draw him*, does he insinuate that the Father does not draw all? or that he draws all *irresistably*? or that those who are drawn at one time may not *draw back* at any other? Is it right to press scripture into the service of a system, by straining its meaning so far beyond the import of the words?

Again, though a man may not be "grafted in Christ" according to the Jewish or Christian dispensation; may he not partake of his quickening sap, according to the more general dispensation of that *saving grace*, which *has appeared to all men*? May not the branches in which that *saving grace appears*, have some connexion with Christ the heavenly vine, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, as well as Job and his friends, Melchisedec, Plato, the wise men, Cornelius, some of his soldiers, and many more who brought forth fruits according to their dispensation? Does not the first general justification so graft all men in him, that if they *bear not fruit* during their *accepted time*, they are justly *taken away, cast forth, and burned as barren branches*?

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V. Your knowledge of the scripture made you foresee this answer, and to obviate it you say: "if you tell me that I mistake, that although we must cease from evil, repent, &c. yet you are far from supposing we can perform these things in our own natural strength, I ask then, in whose strength are they performed? You say, in the strength of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, according to these scriptures, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me, being strengthened with might in the inner man.*"

Permit me to tell you, honored Sir, that I do not admire your quoting scripture for me. You take care to keep out of sight the passages I have quoted, and to produce those which are foreign to the question. To shew that even a sinful Heathen may work for, as well as from life, I could never be so destitute of common sense as to urge the experience of St. Paul, *a father in Christ*: and that of the Ephesians, who were Christians *sealed unto the day of redemption*.

To do justice to free grace, instead of the above-mentioned improper scriptures, you should have produced those which I have quoted in the vindication—Christ is *the light of the world, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world—I am come that they might have life—Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, God's spirit strives with man, even with those who perish. He commands all men every where to repent; nor does he desire to reap where he has not sown.*

VI. Such scriptures as these would have been to the purpose; but I excuse your producing others; for if these had appeared, you would have raised more dust in six lines, than you could have laid in 60 pages; and every attentive reader would have detected the fallacy of your grand argument: "as soon may we expect living actions from a dead corpse; light out of darkness; sight out of blindness; love

“out of enmity; wisdom out of ignorance; fruit out of barrenness, &c. &c. &c. as look for any one good work or thought from a soul who is not” (in some degree) “quickened by the Holy Ghost, and who has not yet found favor with God:” so far at least as to be blessed with a *day of salvation*, and to be a partaker of *the free gift which is come upon all men*.

But, I pray, who is guilty of these absurdities? who expects living actions from a dead corpse, &c. &c.? you or we? You who believe that the greatest part of mankind are left as graceless as devils, as helpless as corpses; and yet gravely go and preach to them repentance and faith, threatening them with an aggravated damnation if they do not turn? Or we who believe that *Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man*; and that his saving, quickening grace *hath appeared unto all men*? Who puts foolish speeches in the mouth of the only wise God? You, who make him expostulate with souls as dead as corpses, and say *ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*? Or we, who assert upon the testimony of the Holy Ghost, that God, by *working in us both to will and to do*, puts us again in a capacity of *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*? Will not our impartial readers see that the absurdity which you try to fix upon us, falls at your own door; and, if your doctrine is true, at the door of the sanctuary itself?

VII. You pursue: “it is most clear that every soul who works in the strength of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, is already a pardoned and justified soul; he already has everlasting life.” Here is some truth and some error; let us endeavour to separate them. Every soul who works in the strength of Christ’s preventing grace, and by his Spirit convincing the world of sin, is undoubtedly interested in the first degree of justification: he is justified from the guilt of original sin, and from the guilt of his own actual sins; and it is absurd to suppose he is justified in the day of judgment, ~~when that day is~~ not

not yet come. He hath a seed of life, or else he could not work; but it is a doubt if this seed will take root; and in case it does, the heavenly plant of righteousness may be *choaked by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, or the desire of other things*, and by that means *become unfruitful*.

As many barbarous mothers destroy the fruit of their womb, either before or after it comes to the birth; so many obstinate sinners obstruct the growth of the spiritual seed that *bruises the serpent's head*; and many flagrant apostates, in *whose heart Christ was once formed, crucify him afresh, and quench the spirit* of his grace? Hence the many miscarriages and apostacies, for which Elisha Coles is obliged to account thus. There are "monsters in spirituals, in whom there is something begotten in their wills, by the common strivings and enlightenings of the Spirit, which attains to a kind of *formality*, but proves in the end a *lump of dead flesh*." Surely that great Calvinian divine was brought to a strait when he thus fathered *formality and dead flesh* upon the Holy Ghost.

VIII. I follow you: "therefore all talk of working for life, and in order to find favor with God, is not less absurd, than if you were to suppose, that a man could at the same moment be both condemned and absolved." What, Sir! may not a man be justly condemned, and yet graciously reprieved? Nay, may not the judge give him an opportunity to make the best of his reprieve, in order to get a full pardon and a place at court? At Geneva we think that the absurdity does not consist in asserting, but in denying it.—"Awake and asleep." What, Sir, is it an absurdity to think that a man may be in the same moment *awake* in one respect, and *asleep* in another? Does not St. Paul say, *let us awake out of sleep*? But this is not all, even in Geneva people can be *drowsy*, that is, half awake and half asleep.—"Dead and alive." I hope you will not fix the charge of absurdity upon Christ, for saying that a certain man was *left half dead*, and

of course *half alive*; and for exhorting the people of Sardis who were *dead*, to *strengthen the things that remained and were ready to die*: nor yet upon St. Paul, for saying that the *dead body* of Abraham begat Isaac, and for speaking of a woman who *was dead while she lived*.

IX. You go on and say, that "it is as absurd to talk of working for life, as to assert that we can be at the same time loved and hated of God." But you forget, Sir, that there are a thousand degrees of love and hatred; and that, in the scripture language, *loving less* is called *hating*: *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated. Except a man hate his father, &c. he cannot be my disciple*. Yea, and we can without absurdity say, that we love the same person in one respect, and hate her in another. I may love a woman as a neighbour, and yet loath her if I consider her in the capacity of a wife. And what absurdity is there in asserting, that while the day of grace lasts, God loves, and yet hates an impenitent sinner? He loves him as his redeemed creature, yet hates him as his rebellious creature: or, in other terms, he loves him with a love of benevolence; but has no more love of complacence for him, than for the devil himself.

X. You proceed: "to talk of working for life is not less absurd, than if you were to suppose, that a man can be at the same moment one with Christ by his spirit dwelling in the heart, and yet not have redemption, peace, and reconciliation by the blood of his cross." Here is, if I mistake not, the language of Babel.

1. You confound the various degrees of *redemption*. Are not thousands of souls redeemed by the *blood* of Christ's cross, who are not yet redeemed by the *power* of his spirit? May not every rebellious sinner out of hell say, God REDEEMETH *my life from destruction*? Is it not a degree of redemption to be kept out of the enjoying the good things of this life, and called to secure the blessings of the next? Did not Cain, Esau, Pharaoh, Saul, and Judas, the five great reprobates,

as some account them, enjoy this degree of redemption for many years? Have not believers an higher degree of REDEMPTION, *even the forgiveness of their sins?* And do not they wait for the highest degree of it, *even the REDEMPTION of their body*, when the trump of God will sound, and wake the dead? Rom. viii. 23.

2. As you confound all the degrees of redemption, so you do all the degrees of the manifestation of the Spirit. He visits all, so as to strive with and reprove them as he did mankind in the days of Noah: but this is no mark that their peace is made, and a firm reconciliation brought about; witness the deluge, which God sent upon those with whom his Spirit had particularly striven 120 years in the days of Noah.—Again some have the spirit of bondage unto fear; but this, far from being a sign that they have full reconciliation, is a divine consciousness that they have it not. And others have had the spirit of adoption, and after having begun in him to grieve or quench him as to end in the flesh. But in the Calvinian Babel these scriptural, experimental distinctions are exploded as metaphysical, if not dreadfully heretical.

XI. You proceed: “you will not assert that a soul “who is quickened together with Christ, and in “whom the spirit of Jesus dwells by his gracious influences can be in a state of enmity with God.” Still the same confounding of things which should be carefully distinguished! May not a sinner “be quickened” by the seed of life, and yet hold it in unrighteousness? May not a backslider crucify Christ afresh in “the gracious influences of his spirit?” And are not such persons “in a state of enmity with God?” But if by a “soul quickened together “with Christ and in whom the spirit of Jesus dwells,” you mean a believer compleatly baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, in whom he that once visited as a monitor now fully resides as a comforter; you

you are right, the enmity ceases, the carnal mind and body of sin are destroyed, and *God is all in all to that just man made perfect in love.*

XII. You add: "If a man is not in a state of enmity, then he must be in a state of pardon and reconciliation." What, Sir! Is there no medium between these extremes? There is, as surely as the morning dawn intervenes between midnight and noon-day. If the king says to some rebels, 'Lay down your arms, surrender, kiss my son, and you shall be pardoned;' the reconciliation on the king's part is undoubtedly begun. So far *was God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.* But can it be said that the reconciliation is begun on the part of the rebels, who have not yet laid down any of their arms? Does not the reconciliation gradually take place as they gradually comply with the king's terms? If they are long in coming to kiss the king's son, is not their full reconciliation suspended till they have fulfilled that last of the king's terms? And tho' the king made the overtures of the reconciliation, is there the least absurdity in saying that they surrender, and kiss the son, in order to find reconciliation? Nay is it either sense or truth to assert, that they are absolutely to do nothing towards it?

XIII. What you say about the 19th article of our church is answered beforehand, Vind. page 58.—But what follows deserves some notice. "When ever God puts forth his quickning power upon a soul, it is in consequence, of his having already taken that soul in covenant with himself, and having washed it white in the blood of the Lamb slain." This is very true, if you speak of the *covenant* of grace, which God made with our first parent and representative after the fall; and of the *washing* of all mankind *white* in the blood of the Lamb from the guilt of original sin, so far as to remit the eternal punishment of it. But you are dreadfully mistaken, if you understand it of the three subsequent

quent degrees of justification and salvation which do not take place but as we work them out with fear and trembling, as God works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

XIV. In the next page you ask some scriptural questions, which I shall scripturally answer. "What did the expiring thief do?" Some hours before he died he obeyed this precept, *To day if you will hear his voice harden not your heart*; he confessed his sin, and believed in Jesus.—"What did Mary Magdalen do?" She forsook her lovers and followed Jesus into Simon's house. "What Lydia?" She **WORSHIPPED GOD**, and resorted where prayer was wont to be made.—"What the Philippian jailor?" He ceased from attempting self-murder, and *falling at the apostle's feet*, enquired *what he must do to be saved*.—"What the serpent-bitten Israelites?" They *looked at the brazen serpent*.—"What Paul himself?" *For this cause I obtained mercy*, says he, *because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*, 1 Tim. i. 3. But this was not all, for, he continued *praying three days and three nights*; and when Ananias came to him, he tarried no longer, but *arose and washed away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord*.—"What did the Corinthians do?" They *heard and believed*, Act. viii. 8.—"And what the Ephesians?" They *trusted in Christ after that they heard the word of truth*, Eph. i. 3.

XV. In the next paragraph (page 6, line 28.) you gravely propose the very objection which I have answered, Vind. page 58, without taking the least notice of my answer. And in the next page you advance one of Dr. Crisp's paradoxes: "*Wherever God puts forth his power upon a soul (and he does so whenever he visits it with even a touch of preventing grace) pardon and reconciliation are already obtained by such an one. He shall never come into condemnation.*"

Young penitents, beware! If you admit this tenet, you will probably stay in the *far country*, vainly fancying you are in your *Father's house*, because
you

you have felt a desire to be there. Upon this scheme of doctrine, Lot's wife might have sat down at the gate of Sodom, concluding that because the angels had taken her by the hand, she was already in Zoar. A dangerous delusion this, against which our Lord himself cautions us by crying aloud, REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE.

I would take the liberty to expostulate with you, honored Sir, about this paradox, if I had not some hope, that it is rather owing to the printer's mistake than your own. If you wrote in your manuscript, *pardon is already obtained FOR, not BY, such an one*, we are agreed; for "Christ made upon the cross a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction *for* the sins of the whole world." But what he *procured FOR us* is not *obtained BY us*, till the Holy Ghost makes the application by faith. "If I had a mind, said the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, to hinder the progress of the gospel, and to establish the kingdom of darkness, I would go about telling people, they might have the Spirit of God and yet not feel it;" or, which is much the same, that the pardon which Christ procured *for* them, is already obtained *by* them, whether they enjoy a sense of it or not.

XVI. In the next paragraph, page 7, (who could believe it!) you come fully into Mr. W.'s doctrine of "doing something, in order to obtain justification." You was reminded (Vind. page 48.) that "St. Paul and Mr. W. generally mean by justification, that wonderful transaction of the Spirit of God in a returning prodigal's conscience, by which the forgiveness of his sins is proclaimed to him thro' the blood of sprinkling." Nevertheless, speaking of the *sense of pardon*, and the *testifying of it to a sinner's conscience*, you grant that *this knowledge of our interest in Christ*, (this experienced justification) is *certainly to be sought in the use of all appointed means; we are to seek that we may find, to ask that we may have, to knock that it may be opened unto us. In this sense*, (the very sense

sense we generally fix to the word justification) *all the texts you have brought to prove that man is to do something in order to obtain justification and to find favour with God, admit of an EASY SOLUTION.*" That is, in plain English, easily demonstrate the truth of Mr. W's. proposition, which has been so loudly exclaimed against as *dreadfully heretical.*

O prejudice, thou mischievous brother of discord, why didst thou cast thy black veil in June, and the following months, over the EASY SOLUTION which has been found out in December? And what a pity is it, dear Sir, you did not see this *solution* before you had attempted to expose our grey-headed Elisha, by the publication of that weak and trifling dialogue with the Popish friar at Paris!

XVII. The next page, the 8th, is already answered, Vind. page 59, &c. and the 9th page is answered in the second check, page 22, in the note upon the Versifier's performance.

Page 10, After shewing that you confound the atonement with the application of it, the work of Christ with that of the Holy Ghost, you produce one of my arguments, (the first you have attempted to refute,) to prove that we must do something in order to justification; I had asserted that we must believe, faith being previous to justification. You say, *I deny the assertion.* Do you indeed, honored Sir! Upon what ground? "The Holy Ghost teaches, say you, that *all who believe ARE justified.*" And does this prove the point? The king says to a deserter, Bow to my Son, and thou shalt not be shot. Bow to the prince, adds an officer; all who bow to him ARE *pardoned.* Must the soldier conclude from the words ARE *pardoned,* then the pardon is previous to the bow? Again, You are sick, and your physician says, Take this medicine; all who take it ARE *cured.* Very well, answers your nurse, you need not then *distress and perplex* my Master, by making him take your remedy. The taking of it cannot possibly be previous to his recovery, for you say, all who take it ARE *cured.*

F

This

This is just such an other argument as that of my honored friend. O Sir, how tottering is that system, which even such a writer as yourself cannot prop up, without putting so forced a construction upon the apostle's words, *All that believe ARE justified!*

Now we have seen upon what scriptural ground you maintain, that believing cannot be previous to justification, permit me, honored Sir, to quote some of the many scriptures which induce us to believe just the reverse. *BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*—that is, in the lowest sense of the word, *thou shalt be justified*; for *God justifies the ungodly that BELIEVE in Jesus*.—*We have BELIEVED in Jesus Christ, that we might be justify'd by the FAITH of Christ*—*Whom he hath set forth to be a propitiation, thro' FAITH in his blood, for the remission, of sins that are past*.—*As Moses lifted up the serpent even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish, should be pardoned, &c.*—*Faith shall be imputed to us for righteousness, if we BELIEVE on him who raised up Jesus*.—*Being therefore justified by FAITH we have peace with God*.—*Without FAITH it is impossible to please God*. He that BELIEVETH NOT, far from being justified, as is insinuated, *shall be damned, the wrath of God abideth on him, he is CONDEMNED ALREADY*. John iii. 18. Light cannot be more opposite to darkness, than this doctrine of Christ to that which my honored friend thinks it his duty to patronize.

XVIII. When you have endeavoured to defend your sentiment from scripture, you attempt to do it from reason. *Faith, say you, can no more subsist without its object, than there can be a marriage without an husband*. This is as proper an argument as you could advance, had you intended to disprove the doctrine you seem studious to defend, for it is evident that a woman must be married, before she can have an husband. So sure then as marriage is previous to hav-

ing

ing an husband, faith is previous to receiving Christ; for we receive him by faith. John i. 12.

However, from this extraordinary argument, you conclude that the doctrine of believing before justification is not less contrary to reason than it is to scripture; but I flatter myself that my judicious readers will draw a conclusion diametrically opposite.

XIX. A quotation from St. Augustin appears next, and secures the ruin of your scheme. For if faith is compared to a lantern, and Christ to the light in the lantern, common sense tells us, we must have the lantern before we can receive the candle which is to give us light. Or, in other words, we must have faith before we can receive Christ; for you very justly observe, that *faith receiveth Christ who is the true light.*

XX. St. Augustin's lantern makes way for the witticism with which you conclude your second epistle. "No letters says my honored friend, were sent thro' the various provinces against old Mordecai for supposing that the woman, Luke 15, lights a candle, &c. in order to find her lost piece; but because he insists upon it, that the piece lights the candle, sweeps the house, and searches diligently in order to find the woman." Permit me to ask dear Sir, whether your wit here has not for a moment got the start of your judgment? I introduced the *woman seeking the piece she had lost*, merely to shew that it is neither an heresy, nor an absurdity to "seek something in order to find it;" and that instance proved my point full as well, as if I had fixed upon *Saul seeking his father's asses*, or *Jacob seeking his brethren in Dothan.*

If it is as great an *absurdity* to say, that sinners are to seek the Lord, as it is to say that a piece seeks the woman who has lost it; let me tell you, dear Sir, that Mr. W. has the good fortune to be countenanced in his folly, first by yourself, who tell us, page 7, that the knowledge of Christ and our interest in him is certainly to be sought in the use of all the appointed means:

And secondly by Isaiah, who says *seek ye the Lord while he may be found*: by St. Paul, who tells the Athenians that *all nations of men are to seek the Lord*: and by Christ himself who says, *they that seek me early shall find me* — *seek that you may find &c.*

I leave you to judge, honored Sir, whether it was worth your while to impeach Mr. W's *good sense* not only by reflecting upon *your own*, but by inevitably involving Isaiah, St. Paul, and our Lord himself in the ridicule cast upon my vindicated friend! For the same sinner, who is represented by the *lost piece*, is a few verses before represented by the *lost son*: and you know Jesus Christ tells us that he came from far to seek his father's pardon and assistance. You begin your

THIRD LETTER

By saying, "how God may deal with the Heathen world, is not for us to pry into." But we may believe what God has revealed. If the Holy Ghost declares, that *in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him*, we may credit what he says, without "being wise above what is written."

If you cannot set aside that apostolic part of the minutes, you try however to press it into the service of your doctrine. "There is, say you, a material difference between saying, *He that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted*, and **SHALL BE accepted**," and because "the verb is in the present tense" you conclude, there is no need of fearing God or working righteousness, in order to find acceptance. This is exactly such another argument as that which I just now refuted, "we need not believe in order to be justified, because it is said, *all that believe ARE justified*, and not **SHALL BE justified**," You can no more prove by the one, that Cornelius provoking God and working unrighteousness, was accepted of him; than by the other that unbelievers **ARE justified**, because it is said that *believers* are so.

A

A similar instance may convince you of it. *All run*, says St. Paul, *but one receiveth the prize*. I who am a stranger to refinements, immediately conclude from those words, that running is *previous* to the receiving of the prize, and in order to it. No, says a friend, "there is a material difference between saying, *one RECEIVETH the prize*, and *one SHALL RECEIVE the prize*. The verb is in the present tense, and therefore the plain sense of the passage is (not that by running he does any thing to receive the prize, but) that he who runs is possessed of the prize, and proves himself to be so. Candid reader, if such an argument proselytes thee to Dr. Crisp's doctrine, I shall suspect there is no small difference between English and Suisse reason.

However to make up the weight of your argument you add, "*Cornelius was a chosen vessel*." True, for *God hath chosen to himself the man that is GODLY*; and such was Cornelius; *a devout man*, says St. Luke, *and one that feared God with all his house*. But if my honored opponent speaks of an *election*, which drags after it the horrors of *absolute* reprobation, and hangs the mill-stone of *unavoidable* damnation about the neck of millions of our fellow-creatures, I must call for *proof*.

Till it comes, I follow you in your observations upon the merit or rewardableness of good works. Most of them are answered Vind. page 74, &c. and 2d check page 43. The rest I answer thus:

(1.) If you do not believe Mr. Henry when he assures us *David speaks OF HIMSELF, the Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness*, &c. Ps. 18, believe at least the sacred historian, who confirms my assertion, ii. Sam. 22. and consider the very title of the Psalm, *David spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of his enemies, and from the hand of Saul*.

(2.) But "when David speaks in his own person, his language is very different." *Enter not into judgment with thy servant*, says he, for in thy sight shall no man.

man living be justified. The psalmist does not here contradict what he says of the rewardableness of good works, Ps. 18. He only appeals from the *law of innocence* to the *law of grace*, and only disclaims all merit in point of justification and salvation, a thing which Mr. W. takes care to do when he says, even in the minutes, "not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Christ."

(3.) My honored correspondent asks next, "where is the man who has the witness of having done what God commanded? I answer, every one has who *walks in the light as God is in the light*, and can say with St. John, *beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, BECAUSE we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.*

(4.) But Bishop Beveridge spoke just the reverse; for he said in his *Private Thoughts* "I sin in my best duties &c." That may be; for he was but a young convert when he wrote his *Private Thoughts*. I hope, before he died he enjoyed more gospel liberty. But whether he did or not, we appeal from *his private thoughts* to the above-mentioned *public declaration* and *evangelical experience* of St. JOHN.

(5.) If many Roman Catholics do not ascribe merit to "mere external performances," I have "done them great injustice;" and to repair that wrong, I declare my full approbation of the excellent passage upon *merit* which you quote in French from the works of the bishop of Meaux. I say in *French*, because your English translation represents him as looking on *all* opinion of merit as *presumptuous*, whereas he blames only *l'opinion d'un mérite présomptueux*, the doctrine of a presumptuous merit—of a merit which is not at all derived from Christ, and does not terminate in the glory of his grace.

The

The dying challenge of Alex. Seton is answered in the 2d Check, 1st Letter. As to your quotation from bishop Cooper, it does as little credit to his *learning*, as to his *charity*; for St. Augustin, who had no more "the spirit of Antichrist" than the bishop himself, uses perpetually the word *merit*, in speaking of man and his works.

Let us now see how you "split the hair," that is, fix the difference there is, between being rewarded *according to our works*, † *BECAUSE of our works*, and *secundum merita operum*, according to the *merit* or *rewardableness* which Christ gives to our works. "The difference, say you, by no means depends upon the splitting of an hair; those expressions are as wide as east from west." Are they indeed! Then it must be the *east* and the *west* of the map of the world, which meet in one common line upon the globe. This will appear if we consider the manner in which you untie the Gordian knot.

"Good works, say you, are rewarded because God of his own meer favour, rich grace, and undeserved bounty, has promised that he will freely give such rewards to those whom he has chosen in his dear Son." Now, Sir, simplify this sentence, and you tell us just that "good works are rewarded because God *freely promised* to reward them."

And is this the *east* of my honored opponent's orthodoxy! Surprising! It just meets the west of popish heterodoxy. You know Sir, that Thomas Aquinas and Scotus are as great divines among the Romanists, as Calvin and Luther among the Protestants: and in flying from Mr. Wesley you are just gone over to Scotus and Baxter; for Scotus and Clara his disciple maintain, that if God gives rewards to the godly, *non oritur obligatio ex natura actus, sed ex sup-*

† See 1. John iii. 22, add Vind: page 70. You have no right to throw out this middle term, till you have proved that my quotations are false.

suppositione decreti & promissi, the obligation does not arise from the nature of the action rewarded but from the decree and free promise of the rewarder. Though so much be given in scripture to good works, says the council of Trent, yet far be it from a christian to glory in himself, and not in the Lord, whose goodness is so great to all men, that he wills those things to be THEIR MERITS, which are HIS GIFTS. Can. 16. de Justif.

Most Protestants, says Baxter, will take merit to signify something which profiteth God, and which is our own, and not his GIFT and GRACE, but they are mistaken.

Some however are more candid; Bucer says, if by MERITING the holy fathers and others mean nothing but to do in faith, by the grace of God, good works which the Lord has PROMISED to reward, in this sense (which is that which Scotus, Baxter, and Mr. W. fix to merit) we shall in no wise condemn that word.

Hence it is, that whole congregations of real protestants have not scrupled at times to use the word WE MERIT in their humblest addresses to the throne of grace. "Congregations of real Protestants!" says my honored friend, *Popery is about midway between Protestantism and such worshippers. Who are they?*" I answer they are the orthodox, opposers of the minutes, the truly honorable the Countess of Huntingdon, the Rev. Mr. Shirley, the Rev. Mr. Madan, and all the congregations that use their hymns; for they all agree to sing,

"Thou hast the righteousness supply'd

By which WE MERIT heaven."

See Lady Huntingdon's Hymns, Bristol edition, page 399; and the Rev. Mr. Madan's collection which you frequently use, hymn 25, page 27, last stanza. Come then, dear Sir, while Mr. M. shakes hands with his venerable father Mr. W. permit the vindicator of the minutes to do the same with the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, and let us lovingly follow:

low Scotus and Baxter singing, *Christ hath the righteousness supply'd by which we MERIT heaven.*

If you say, True, but it is of God's own meet favour, rich grace, and undeserved bounty in his dear Son; I answer, We are agreed, and before-hand I subscribe an hundred such clauses, being fully persuaded of the truth of Mr. W's. proposition when explained according to the analogy of faith, "*There is no original merit but in the blood and obedience of Christ; and no derived merit, or (if you dislike that word out of the Lock-chapel) no derived rewardableness, but that which we are supplied with thro' the Spirit of Christ and the blood of his cross.*" If Mr. W. meant any more by the saying you have quoted, he will permit me to use his own words, and say that he "leaned too much toward Calvinism."

I cannot better close the subject of *merit*, and requite your quotation from Dr. Willet, than by transcribing a third passage from the pious and judicious Mr. Baxter.

' We are agreed on the negative: (1.) That no man or angel can merit of God in proper commutative justice, giving him somewhat for his benefits that shall profit him, or to which he had no absolute right. (2.) No man can merit any thing of God upon the terms of the law of innocency, (but punishment). (3.) Nor can he merit any thing of God by the law of grace, unless it be supposed first to be a *free-gift* and merited by Christ.'

' And affirmatively we are, I think, agreed (1.) That God governs us by a *law of grace* which hath a *promise*, and gives by way of *reward*. (2.) That God calls it *his justice* to reward men according to his law of grace, Heb. xi. 6. 2 Tim. iv. 8. (3.) That this supposes, that such works as God rewards have a *moral aptitude* for that reward, which chiefly consists in these things, that they spring from the Spirit of God, that their faultiness is pardoned thro' the blood and merits of Christ, that they are done
' in

in love and to the glory of God, and that they are presented to God by Jesus Christ. (4.) That this *moral aptitude* is called in scripture *αξια*, that is *worthiness* or *merit*; so that thus far *worthiness* or *merit* is a scripture phrase. And (5.) that this *worthiness* or *merit* is only in point of *paternal, governing justice*, according to the *law of grace*, ordering that which in itself is a *free gift merited by Christ*.

All orthodox Christians hold the fore-described doctrine of merit in *sense*, tho' not in *words*: for they that deny *merit*, confess the *rewardableness* of our obedience, and acknowledge that the scripture useth the term *worthy*, and that *αξιος* and *αξια* may be translated *meriting* and *merit*, as well as *worthy* and *worthiness*. This is the same thing, in other words, which the ancient Christians meant by *merit*. When godly persons earnestly extol holiness, saying that *the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, and yet deny all *merit*, reviling all that assert it, they do but shew that they understand not the word, and think others also misunderstand it: and so we are reproaching one another, where we are agreed and know it not: like the woman who turned away her servant upon the controversy, Whether the house should be swept with a *befom* or with a *broom*.

The partial teachers are the cause of this, while instead of opening the doctrine, and shewing in what sense we have or have not any *worthiness* or *merit*, they without distinction cry down *merit*, and reproach those that do otherwise. And if they do but say "Such a man, speaks for *merit* and *free will*," that they sufficiently rendered him odious to their followers, when yet all sober Christians in all ages have been for *merit* and *free-will* in a sound sense. And is not this to be adversaries to truth, and love, and peace?"

I formerly thought, that tho' we agree in the thing, it is best to omit the name, because the Papists have

' have abused it: and I think so still in such compa-
 ' nies, where the use of it not understood will scan-
 ' dalize men, and do more harm than good. But in
 ' other cases, I now think it better to keep the word
 ' (1.) lest we seem to the ignorant to be of another
 ' religion than † all the ancient churches were.' (2.)
 ' Lest we harden the Papists, Greeks and others, by
 ' denying sound doctrine in *terms*, which they will
 ' think we deny in *sense*. And (3.) Because our pe-
 ' nury of words is such, that for my part I remember
 ' no other word so fit to substitute instead of *merit*,
 ' *desert* or *worthiness*. The word *rewardableness* is long
 ' and harsh. But it is nothing else that we mean.'
Baxter's end of doctrinal controversies, page 294.

I am glad that my honored opponent, in the be-
ginning of his

F O U R T H L E T T E R,

does Mr. W. the justice to "admit of the explana-
 tion I have "given of" that misunderstood assertion,
 "All who are convinced of sin undervalue them-
 selves." Had you done otherwise, Sir, you would
 have shewn *judgment without mercy*. Nevertheless, you
 still think that explanation forced; while many be-
 lieve it not only natural, and agreeable to Mr. W's.
 whole plan of doctrine, but so *solid* that no argu-
 ments can overthrow it. If you turn to the second
 check, page 44, you will see more clearly, that you
 do Mr. W. no favor in "dismissing this article of
 of the minutes's

But you prepare to attack the next with the ut-
 most vigor. *A part of the minutes which you esteem most*
contrary to sound doctrine is, say you, that "We are
every

† It is a great advantage to the Papists, says our judicious author,
 that many Protestants wholly disclaim the word *merit*, and simply
 deny the merit of gospel-obedience. For hereupon the teachers
 shew their scholars, that all the fathers speak for merit, and to tell
 them, that the Protestant doctrine is new and heretical, as being
 contrary to all the ancient doctors: and when their scholars see it
 with their eyes, no wonder if they believe it, to our dishonor.

every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God according to the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour, &c." And it is, I own, diametrically opposite to the favorite sentiment which you thus express, "Tho' I believe that David's SIN displeased the Lord, must I therefore believe that David's PERSON was under the curse of the law?" (I suppose you mean *under God's displeasure*, for of this Mr. W. speaks, nor does he mention *the curse of the law* in all the minutes) You boldly answer, "Surely no.—Like Ephraim he was still a pleasant child: tho' he went on frowardly" in *adultery and murder*, "he did not lose the character of the man after God's own heart." My dear Sir, you might as well have advanced at once that unguarded proposition of Dr. Crisp, "God does no longer stand displeased, tho' a believer do sin often: no sin can possibly do him any hurt." Is this what you call "sound doctrine?" And is that the *worst part of the minutes*, which opposes such a dangerous tenet? Then how *excellent* must the *other parts* be! Indeed, Sir, their vindicator could say nothing stronger to demonstrate their soundness, reasonableness and importance. But let us consider your arguments; and that with such care, as the importance of the subject requires.

I. "David's SIN displeased the Lord," but not "his PERSON." This is what you must mean if you oppose Mr. W's. proposition. I like your shifting the terms; it is a sign that you are little ashamed the world should see the good Doctor's scheme without some covering. *Erubisti, salva res est.* (1.) Your intimation that the Lord was not displeased at David's PERSON, bears hard upon the equity and veracity of God. David commits adultery and murder in Jerusalem, and Claudius in Rome. God sees them, and says agreeably to your scheme. 'They are both guilty of the same crimes, and both impenitent: but David is a Jew, an elect, a sheep, and therefore, tho' he sins against *ten* times more light than the other,

Further, I am not at all displeased at him. But Claudius is an Heathen, a reprobate, a goat, and my anger smokes against him; he shall surely die.—

If this is God's method, how can he make the following appeal! *O house of Israel are not MY ways equal? Are not YOUR ways unequal?—The soul that sinneth it shall die: wherefore turn ye, Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* See Ez. xviii. and 2d check, page 69.

(2.) Your distinction is overthrown by scripture; for we read Gen. xxxviii. 10. that *The thing which Onan did displeased the Lord.* “True, might you say upon your scheme, this is the very thing I assert; this mode of speech shews that God was angry at Onan's *sin*, and not at his *person*.”—But this would be a great mistake, honored Sir; for the sacred historian adds immediately, *Wherefore God slew him also.* He shewed his heavy displeasure at his *person* by punishing him with death, as well as his brother Er, who was wicked in the sight of the Lord.

(3.) But if you will not believe Mr. W. when he declares that God is displeased at the *persons* of the righteous, the moment they do those *things* which displease him, believe at least the oracles of God. *God's anger was kindled against Moses*, Ex. iv. 14.—*The Lord was very angry against Aaron*, Deut. ix. 20, and with all Israel, witness those awful words, *let me alone, that I may consume them in a moment.* Isaiah, whom you allow to be an elect, says, *thou wast angry with ME.* God himself says, Is. xlvii. 6, *I was angry with my people*; and David, who frequently deprecates God's wrath in his penitential psalms, observes that *his anger smokes against the sheep of his pasture*, when they go astray. Ps. lxxiv. 1.

(4.) The new testament inculcates this doctrine as well as the old. St Paul having reminded the believers of Ephesus, that *no whoremonger or covetous person hath an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God*, subjoins this seasonable caution: *let no man*

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deceive

deceive you ; no not those good men, Dr. Crisp and the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* : for because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.—Impossible ! say those orthodox Protestants ; you may be children of disobedience, not only unto whoredom and covetousness, but unto adultery and murder without fearing that the wrath of God will come upon you for those things : No, no, you will be “ pleasant children still.” See *Vind.* page 89.

II. You proceed : “ Shall I believe that because David was ungrateful, God (whose “ gifts and callings are without repentance) was unfaithful ? ” And shall I believe, that God is not as faithful when he accomplishes his threatnings, as when he fulfils his promises ? You reply, “ God’s gifts and callings are without repentance.” And does this prove that God’s warnings are without meaning, and his threatnings without truth ? St Paul spoke those words of the election of the Jews ; and it is certain God does not repent that he formerly called them, and gave them the land of Canaan ; any more than he repents his having now rejected them, and taken from them the good land which he gave their fathers : for as he had once sufficient reasons to do the one, so he has now to do the other.

But if you will make this passage mean, that the divine favour and blessings can never be forfeited through any fall into sin ; I beg you will answer these queries. Had not God given all angels a place in his favor and glory ? And did not many of them lose it by their fall ? Was not innocent Adam interested in the divine favor and image ? And did he not lose both, together with paradise, when he fell into sin ? Did not king Saul forget the crown which God had given him, and the throne to which he had called him ? Were not Judas’s calling and apostleship forfeited by his unfaithfulness, as well as one of the twelve thrones which Christ had promised him ? What will you say of the unprofitable servant, from whom

whom his lord took the talent unimproved? Lost he not a blessing given, and his calling to occupy with it? And can you assert, that the man who took his fellow-servant by the throat did not lose the forgiveness of a debt of ten thousand talents? Or that those apostates, who tread under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith they were SANCTIFIED, do not forfeit their SANCTIFICATION by doing despite to the spirit of grace? Is it right thus to set the author of the epistle to the Romans against the author of the epistle to the Hebrews?

III. Your bringing in backsliding EPHRAIM the pleasant child, as a witness of the truth of your doctrine, is a most unhappy proof. Rejoice not, O Israel, as other people, says the Lord, Hos. ix. 1, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God. This whoring Israel is called Ephraim ver. 13. Ephraim, the pleasant child, is planted as a pleasant plant. Notwithstanding, Ephraim shall bring forth his children for the murderer. All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I HATED them. For the wickedness of their doings, I will drive them out of mine house; I will love them NO MORE. Hence the prophet observes immediately after, Ephraim is smitten, my God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him.

IV. However, my honored friend still affirms, that "David, notwithstanding his horrible backslidings, did not lose the character of the man after God's own heart." But he will permit me to believe the contrary, (1.) Upon the testimony of the Psalmist himself, who says in your favorite psalm, thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been very wroth with thine anointed: thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Ps. lxxxix. 38.

(2.) Where is David called the man after God's own heart, while he continued an impenitent adulterer? How much more guarded is the scripture than your letters! David did that which was right in

the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside, save only in the matter of Uriah, 1 Kings xv. 5. Here you see the immoral parenthesis of ten months spent in adultery and murder, expressly pointed at, and excepted by the Holy Ghost.

(3.) David himself, far from thinking that sin could never separate between God and a *just man* who *draws back* into wickedness, speaks thus in the last charge which he gave to Solomon; *and thou Solomon my son, know the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever.* 1 Chr. xxviii. 9. Hence it appears that the God of Solomon's father is very different from the picture which Dr. Crisp draws of *David's God*. The former can be so displeased at an impenitent backslider as to *cast him off for ever*; while the latter accounts him a *pleasant child still*. But let us come to matter of fact.

(4.) Displeasure, anger, or wrath in God, is not that disturbing boisterous passion so natural to fallen man; but an invariable disapprobation of sin, and a steady design to punish the sinner. Now God severely manifested this righteous displeasure at David's person, when he punished him by not restraining any longer the ambition of his rebellious son. How remarkably did his dreadful punishments answer his Heinous crimes! He wanted the fruit of his adultery to live, but inflexible justice destroys it. *The crown of righteousness was fallen from his head, and his royal crown is profaned and cast to the ground.*

He had not turned out *the way-faring man*, the hellish tempter; and he is turned out of his own palace and kingdom. He flies beyond Jordan for his life; and as he flies *Shemei throws stones at him*; volleys of *curses* accompany the stones; and the most cutting challenges follow the curses: *Come out, thou bloody man, said he, thou man of Belial; the Lord hath delivered thy kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son;*
and

and behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man. To which David could answer nothing, but “*Let him curse; for the Lord, by not restraining his wickedness, hath permissively said unto him, Curse David.* I see the impartial justice of a sin-avenging God, through the cruel abuse of this raging man.” This was not all: He had *secretly* committed adultery with Uriah’s wife, and his son *publicly* commits incest with his own wives. And to compleat the horror of his punishment, he leaves the most dreadful curse upon his posterity. *Thou hast slain Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon,* says the Lord; *now therefore the sword shall NEVER depart from thy house,* and thy own children shall murder one another. What a terrible punishment was this! And how strong must be the prejudice of those, who maintain that God was not displeased at David’s person!

V. Pass we now to an argument, which you seem to consider as one of the main pillars of your doctrine. “If one believer sin by an unclean thought, say you, and another by an unclean act, does the former continue in a state of grace, and the other forfeit his sonship? Take heed lest you should be forced to go to Rome for an answer to this query.” Without going even to the convent of the Benedictine monks in Paris, I answer, it is evident from scripture, that an adulterous thought delighted in is adultery. He that entertains such a thought is an adulterer, one who is absolutely unfit for the presence of an holy God. *Be not deceived,* says St. Paul; *neither fornicators nor adulterers shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Therefore adultery of heart certainly excludes an impenitent backslider out of heaven; though it will not sink him into so deep an hell, as if he had drawn another into the commission of his intended crime. You add,

“But if David had only had an angry thought, he had still been a murderer in the sight of God.”

Not so; for there is a righteous anger, which is a virtue and not a sin; or else how could Christ have *looked round about on the Pharisees with anger*, and continued sinless? You mean probably, that if David had only *hated* Uriah in his heart, he would have been a murderer. If so, your observation is very just, for *he that hateth his brother*, says St. John, *is a MURDERER*; and you know, adds he, *that no murderer*, though he were a royal psalmist, *hath eternal life abiding in him*.

But what do you get by these arguments? Nothing at all. You only make it easier to prove that your doctrine is erroneous. For if David would have forfeited heaven by *looking on Uriah's Wife, to lust after her in his heart*; or by intending in his breast to murder her husband; how much more did he forfeit it, when his mental sins fully ripened into outward enormities!—*Ye are of your father the devil whose works ye do*, said Christ to some of the chosen nation: and if adultery and murder are works of the devil, it follows from those words of our Lord, that while David continued impenitent, he was *NOT a man after God's own heart*, as my honored opponent too charitably supposes; but a man after the own heart of him, *who abode not in the truth, and is a murderer from the beginning*.

VI. But you add, "Sin did not reign in him as a king, it only for a time usurped as a tyrant." Nay Sir, sin is a tyrant wherever he reigns, and he reigns wherever he *usurps*. "Where will you draw the line" between the reign and the tyranny of Sin? Are not both included under the word *dominion*? Sin says St. Paul, *shall not have DOMINION over you that are under grace*. Had I made such a *distinction* as this, some protestants would deservedly have called it *metaphysical*; but as it comes from the orthodox author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* it will probably pass for *evangelical*.

Very

Very different however is St. Peter's orthodoxy. *Of whom a man is overcome, says he, of the same is he brought into bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. Nevertheless even such apostates, so long as the day of their visitation lasteth, may again repent and believe; for as you justly observe, they have still an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

VII. You try to prove your point by scripture. *There is, say you, no condemnation to them who are in Christ.* True! but it is while they walk *not after the flesh, but after the spirit*; a clause which you prudently keep out of sight. And surely David walked after the flesh, when in the act of adultery and murder.—You proceed, “*who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*” Nobody, if God's elect are penitent believers, *who walk not after the flesh*; but if they are *impenitent adulterers and hypocritical murderers*; Jews and Gentiles, Law and Gospel, Prophets and Apostles, God and their own conscience, ALL will agree to lay their crimes to their charge.—You urge that “*Christ by one offering hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.*” True! but not those who are *unsanctified*. And certainly such are all adulterers and murderers. These ought rather to be ranked with those who *tread under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified*.

“It is said, however, ye (believing, loving, fruitful Colossians, see Chap. i. 4, 6.) *are compleat in him.*” It is so; but not ye impenitent backsliders, ye unclean defilers of another's bed. Such are *compleat in evil not in good, in Belial not in Christ*. Alas for the prostitution of the sacred and pure word of God! Can it also be pressed into the service of profaneness and impurity? To rescue at least one sentence from such manifest abuse I might observe, the original may, with the greatest propriety be rendered

dered "*filled with (or by) him,*" instead of *compleat in him*; and I think the context fixes this sense upon it. The apostle is cautioning the Colossians against vain philosophers, whose doctrine was empty and deceitful. Now that he might do this the more effectually, he points out a more excellent teacher, whose character and qualifications he describes when he says, *in him dwelleth the fullness πλήρωμα, of the Godhead.* He immediately adds *πεπληρωμένοι ἐν αὐτῷ.* (a verb of the same etymology with the noun and undoubtedly of a similar import) *ye are filled with (or by) him.* As if he had said "Christ is filled with the Godhead of the Father, and ye with the spirit of Christ, the spirit of wisdom, righteousness, and strength." Plenitudo Christi (says the learned and pious Bengelius on the passage) redundat in ecclesiam, "the fullness of God dwelling in the Mediator overflows upon his church." The very sense our translators have given the very same two words in Ephes. iii. 19. Why they rendered them differently here is hard to say.

VIII. You go on, "no falls or backslidings in God's children, can ever bring them again under condemnation, because *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death.*" A most dangerous proposition, exposed Vind. page 88, and contrary to the very scripture by which you try to support it. (1.) To the context, where those to whom *there is no condemnation*, are said to be persons who *walk not after the flesh*, and are therefore very different from impenitent adulterers and murderers, who bring forth the most execrable fruits of the flesh. (2.) To the text itself; for if *the law, or power of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made the believer free from the law, or power of sin*; how can he be represented as the tame servant of sin;—as sold under sin—sold under adultery and murder for ten months! But you are not at a loss for an answer.

IX. "We

IX. " We are very apt, say you, to set up mountainous distinctions concerning the various degrees of sin, especially of sins after conversion : " This, together with your placing " an angry thought " upon a level with deliberate murder, seems to insinuate that you make very little difference between an atrocious crime and a sin of surprize ; so that, upon your scheme, a bloody murderer may plead that he is not more guilty, than a man who has felt a motion of impatience ; and the latter may be hurried out of his wits, as if he had committed murder. To remove this mistake, I need only observe, that if all are papists who make a material difference between various sins, or between the same sins variously aggravated, my worthy opponent is as sound a papist as myself : for when he acts as a magistrate, he does not promiscuously pass the same sentence upon every one. He commits one to prison, and dismisses another with a gentle reprimand. Our Lord himself sets you the pattern of this equity where he says, that the Pharisees *shall receive the GREATER damnation*, and that it *shall be MORE TOLERABLE for Sodom than for Corazin in the day of judgment* : whence we may justly infer, that the sin of some is more " mountainous " than that of others.

But as you have made choice of David's case, permit me to argue from his experience. He was once, you know, violently angry with Nabal ; but as he seasonably restrained his anger, and meekly confessed his sin, God forgave him without " breaking his bones." Not so when the unrestrained evil of his heart in the matter of Uriah produced the external fruits of treachery and murder. For *then* the Lord inflicted upon him all the dreadful punishments which we have already considered. *Hear the rod* therefore, and learn what *vast* difference the Lord makes between sins whether committed after, or before conversion.

X. What follows is a sweet and smooth Antinomian pill, so much the more dangerous as it is gilt with

with gold taken from the sanctuary, from *the golden altar* itself. Hence it is that multitudes swallow it down as *rich grace* without the least scruple or suspicion. Lord, dart a beam of thy wisdom into the mind of thy servant; that I may separate the precious from the vile, and expose the dangerous ingredient without depreciating the gold that covers it.

“What is all sin, do you say, before the infinitely precious atoning blood of Jesus?” Nothing at all, when that blood is humbly apprehended by penitent believers who depart from all iniquity. But, when it is *accounted a common thing*, and trodden under foot by impenitent apostates; or wantonly pleaded in defence of sin by loose Nicolaitans or lukewarm Laodiceans, it does not answer its gracious design. On the contrary, *how shall we escape*, says St. Paul, *if we thus neglect such great salvation!* And *of how much sorer punishment* than others *shall they be thought worthy*, who do such despite to the spirit of grace! see Heb. ii. 3, and x. 29. You go on,

“If Christ has fulfilled the whole law and borne the curse, then all debts and claims against his people, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, be they before, or be they after conversion, are for ever and for ever cancelled. All trespasses are forgiven them.—They are justified from all things.—They already have everlasting life.” What! before they repent and believe! A bold assertion this! which sets Jesus against Christ—our PRIEST against our PROPHET. For Christ himself teaches us that many for whom his *fatlings are killed*, and *all things are now ready*, thro’ an obstinate refusal of his *sincere* (I hope no body will say *hypocritical*) invitations, *shall never taste of his supper*. And as if this was not enough to arm us against your doctrine, he commissioned an apostle to assure his church, that some who have *tasted* of his gospel-supper, that is, who *have been enlightened*, *have tasted the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and the power,*

of the world to come, do crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and by that mean, so totally fall away, that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. A clear proof this that those who once truly repented, and were even made partakers of the Holy Ghost, may quench the Spirit, and sin against the Holy Ghost, may not only fall, but fall finally, Heb. vi. 4.

(2.) Your doctrine sets also our high PRIEST against our heavenly KING, who declares, that if he who was once his faithful servant, begins to beat his fellow servants, much more to murder them, he will, as judge of all, command him to be bound hand and foot, and delivered to the tormenters. See 2d check, page 4.

(3.) Your doctrine drags after it all the absurdities of eternal, absolute justification. It sets aside the use of repentance and faith, in order to pardon and acceptance. It represents the sins of the elect as forgiven, not only before they are confessed, but even before they are committed; a notion which that strong Calvinist Dr. Owen himself could not but oppose. It supposes that all the penitents who have believed that they were once children of wrath, and that God was displeased at them when they lived in sin, have believed a lie. It makes the preaching of the gospel one of the most absurd, wicked and barbarous things in the world. For what can be more absurd than to say *repent ye and believe the gospel, he that believeth shall be damned*, if a certain number can never repent or believe, and a certain number can never be damned? And what can be more wicked, than to distress elect sinners by bidding them *fly from the wrath to come*, if there is absolutely no wrath, neither past, present, nor to come for them, if all their sins "be they more or less, be they small or great are for ever and for ever cancelled?" As for the reprobates, how barbarous is it to bid them fly, if adamant chains, eternal decrees of past wrath, perpetually bind them down, that they may never escape the repeated eternal strokes of the wrath to come?

(4.) But

(4.) But what shocks me most in your scheme, is the reproach which it unavoidably fixes upon Christ. It says, "The elect are justified from all things even before they believe." In all their sins "God views them *without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing*: they stand always compleat in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer." "*Black in themselves*, they are comely thro' his comeliness:" so that when they commit adultery and murder, "*He who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, can nevertheless address them with, *Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee.*"

What a prostitution of the word of God is here! We blame a wild youth for dropping some bold innuendos; about Jupiter in a play composed by a poor Heathen. But I acquit thee of indecency, O Terence, if a vindicator of Christian piety, has a right to represent our holy and righteous God, as saying to a bloody adulterer in *flagranti delicto*, *Thou art all fair my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee.* And are these the fat pastures and lympid waters, where gospel-preachers "feed the sheep?" Where then! Oh where are the "barren pastures and muddled waters" in which barefaced Antinomians feed the goats? Is not this taking the children's bread to cast it to dogs? I had almost asked, *Is it not the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place?* See ye not the Lord, O ye mistaken Christians, looking down from the habitation of his holiness? And do ye not hear him thunder this expostulation from heaven? *How long will ye blaspheme mine honor, and have such pleasure in deceit! Know ye not that I have chosen to myself the man that is godly, and that him who delighteth in iniquity doth my soul abhor?*

(5.) And plead not, dear Sir, that you have quoted scripture in defence of your point. If the church says in a mystical song, "*I am black in the eyes of the world, because the sun of affliction and persecution hath looked upon me while I kept the vineyards; but I am comely in the*"

the fight of God whose spirit enables me with unwearied patience to *bear the burden and heat of the day*;" you have absolutely no right, either from divinity or criticism, to make those words mean "*I am black* by the atrocious crimes which I actually commit, black by the horrors of adultery and murder; but no matter; *I am comely* by the purity and charity of my Saviour: my sins, be they small or be they great, are for ever and for ever cancelled; I am justified from all things."—Again, if God says to a penitent believer, to a soul *actually washed, walking with him as Enoch, and walking in white, as the few names in Sardis who had not defiled their garments*, "*Thou art all fair, my undefiled*:" is it right to take those gracious words, and apply them to every lukewarm Laodicean we meet with: and to every apostate, who not only *defiles his garments*, but *wallows in the mire like the sow that was washed*?

(6.) Another great, and if I am not mistaken, insurmountable difficulty attends your scheme. You tell us that "a believer's person stands absolved and always compleat in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer." But I ask, Was he absolved *before* he was a believer? If you answer, "No, he was absolved the moment he began to believe," it follows that he *does something*, that is, he *believes* towards his absolution. And thus your main pillars, "that faith is not previous to justification, that there is no wrath in God for the elect, and that all claims against his people before or after conversion are for ever cancelled," are not only broken, but ground to powder. Add to this that if the believer is justified in consequence of his faith, it is evident that his justification while he is on earth, can stand no longer than his faith, and that if he *makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience as Hymeneus*, he must again *come into condemnation*. But supposing that to avoid these inconveniencies you boldly say, "He was justified from the time the Lamb was slain,

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slain, that is from the beginning of the world." You point-blank contradict Christ, who says that *he who believeth not is condemned already*. Thus either the veracity of our Lord, or the truth of your doctrine must go to the bottom. A sad dilemma this, for those who confound Crispianity with Christianity!

XI. You reply, "As soon shall Satan pluck Christ's crown from his head, as his purchase from his hand." Here is a great truth, making way for a palpable error, and a dreadful insinuation. Let us (1.) see the great truth. It is most certain that no body shall ever be able to pluck Christ's sheep, that is, penitent believers, who hear his voice and follow him, out of his protecting almighty hand. But if the minds of those penitent believers are corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; if they wax wanton against him, turn after Satan, end in the flesh, and draw back to perdition; if growing fat and kicking like *Jeshurun*, they neigh like high-fed horses after their neighbours wives; we demand proof that they belong to the fold of Christ, and are not rather goats and wolves in sheep's cloathing, who cannot without conversion enter into the kingdom of heaven. (2.) The palpable error is, that none of those for whom Christ died can be cast away and destroyed, that no virgin's lamp can go out, no promising harvest be choaked with thorns, no branch in Christ cut off for unfruitfulness, no pardon forfeited, and no name blotted out of God's book.—That no salt can lose its flavour, nobody receive the grace of God in vain, bury his talent, neglect such great salvation, trifle away a day of visitation, look back after setting his hand to the plow, and grieve the spirit till he is quenched, and strives no more. This error so conducive to the Laodicean case, is expressly opposed by St. Peter, who informs us that some deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And Christ himself, far from desiring to keep his lukewarm purchase in his hand, declares that he will spue it out of his mouth. Rev. iii. 16.

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Fals we on (2.) to the dreadful insinuation. While you perpetually try to comfort a few elect, some of whom, for what I know, comfort themselves already with their neighbours wives, yea, and the wives of their fathers; please to tell us how we shall comfort millions of reprobates, who, for what you know, try to save themselves from this adulterous generation. Do ye not hear how Satan, upon a supposition of the truth of your doctrine, triumphs over those unhappy victims of what some call God's sovereignty? While that old murderer shakes his bloody hand over the myriads devoted to endless torments, methinks I hear him say to his fellow-executioners of divine vengeance, *As soon shall Christ's crown be plucked from his head as this his free gift from my hand.* Let yonder little flock of the elect commit adultery and incest without any possibility of missing heaven. I object no more. See what crowds of reprobates may pray and reform, and strive without any possibility of escaping hell. Let those gay elect shout everlasting love! eternal justification! and finished salvation! I consent! See, ye fiends, see the immense prey that awaits us, and roar with me before-hand *Everlasting wrath! eternal reprobation! and finished damnation!*

XII. "Our ninth article maintains that good works necessarily spring out of a lively faith, in so much that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruits." *This you say I most firmly believe;* And nevertheless, to prove just the contrary, to shew that when David committed adultery and murder he had a *lively faith*, and was in a state of justification and sanctification, you quote a verse of an hymn, composed by the Rev. Mr. C. Wesley, which only confirms what I say of undervaluing, Vind. page 83. But you mistake him, if you suppose that when *Not one bud of grace appears* to ourselves, many, may not appear to others; and if you apply to outward enormities greedily committed, what the poet means of inward motions of sin cordially

dially lamented and steadily opposed. Nevertheless, as some expressions in this hymn are not properly guarded, the pious author will forgive me if I transcribe part of a letter which I lately received from him.

“ I was once on the brink of Antinomianism, by unwarily reading Crisp and Saltmarsh. Just then warm in my first love, I was in the utmost danger, when providence threw in my way Baxter’s treatise intitled, *An hundred errors of Dr. Crisp demonstrated*. My brother was sooner apprehensive of the dangerous abuse which would be made of our unguarded hymns and expressions, than I was. Now I also see and feel we must all sink—unless we call St. James to our assistance. Yet let us still insist as much or more than ever on St. Paul’s justification. What God has joined together let no man put asunder. The great Chillingworth saw clearly the danger of separating St. James from St. Paul. He used to wish that whenever a chapter of St. Paul’s justification was read, another of St. James might be read at the same time.”

XIII. When my honored correspondent has endeavoured to prove by the above-mentioned scriptures, arguments, and quotations, that an impenitent adulterer and murderer, instead of being under God’s displeasure, is “ a pleasant child still ;” to compleat his work, he proceeds to shew the good that falls into sin do to believers. Never did the pious author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* employ his pen in a work less conducive to piety !

“ God, says he, often brings about his purposes by those very means, which to the human eye would certainly defeat them. He has always the same thing in view, his own glory and the salvation of his elect by Jesus Christ. This Adam was accomplishing when he put the whole world under the curse.” Hail Adam under the fatal tree ! Pluck and eat abundantly, for “ thou accomplishest the
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the salvation of the elect! Oh the inconsistency of your doctrine! If we insist upon *doing the will of God* in order to enter his kingdom, we are boldly exclaimed against as proudly sharing the glory of our redemption with Christ. But here Adam is represented as his partner in the work of salvation, and a share of his glory, positively assigned to the fall, i. e. to his disobedience to the divine will. St. Paul asserts that *by one man (Adam) came death, and sin the sting of death; and so death with his sting passed upon all men.* But you inform us that Adam by his sin “accomplished the salvation of the elect.” If this is not plucking a jewel from Christ’s crown, to adorn the most improper head in the world next to that of Satan, I am very much mistaken.

But if God “*brought about his purpose*” concerning the salvation of the elect by the fall of Adam; tell us, I pray, who brought about the purpose concerning the damnation of the reprobates? Had the Lord “*always this thing in view*” also? On the brink of what a dreadful abyss hath your doctrine brought me!—Sir, my mind recoils; I fly from the God whose unprovoked wrath rose before the beginning of the world, against millions of his unformed, and therefore guiltless creatures! He that *tasted death for every man* bids me fly, and he points me from Dr. Crisp to God whose mercy is over all his works, till they personally forfeit it by obstinately trampling upon his richest grace.

XIV. As if it was not enough to have represented our salvation in part *accomplished* by the transgression of our first parents: you bring in *Herod and Pontius Pilate*, and observe, to the honor of the good which sin does to the elect; that those unrighteous judges did *whatsoever God’s hand and counsel determined before to be done.* If you quote this passage to insinuate that God pre-determined their *sin*, you reflect upon divine holiness, and apologize for the murder.

ers of our Lord, as you have for the murderer of Uriah.

I grant, that when God saw, in the light of his infinite fore-knowledge, that Pilate and Caiaphas would absolutely chuse injustice and cruelty; he *determined* that they should have the awful opportunity of exercising them against his Anointed. As a skilful pilot, without pre-determining and raising a contrary wind, foresees it will rise, and pre-determines so to manage the rudder and sails of his ship, as to make it answer a good purpose. So God over-ruled the foreseen wickedness of those men, and made it subservient to his merciful justice in offering up the true paschal Lamb. But, as it would be very absurd to ascribe to the *contrary wind* the praise due to the *pilot's skill*: so it is very unevangelical to ascribe to the sin of Pilate, or of Joseph's brethren, the good which God drew from some of it's extraordinary circumstances.

XV. "The Lord has promised to make *all things* work for good to those that love him—and if all things, then their very sins and corruptions are included in the royal promise." A syren-song this! which you unhappily try to support by scripture. But (1.) if *this is the LOVE of God that we keep his commandments*, how will you prove that David loved God, when he left his own wife for that of Uriah? Does not our Lord declare that those who will not *forsake husband, wife, children and all things for his sake, are not worthy of him*, either as believers or lovers? And are those *worthy of him* who break his commandments, and take their neighbours wives? Again, if St. John speaking of one who does not relieve an indigent brother, asks with indignation, *How dwelleth the love of God in HIM!* May not I with greater reason say, *How dwelt the love of God in DAVID!* Who, far from assisting Uriah, murdered his soul by drunkenness, and his body with the sword! And if David did *not* love God, how can you believe that a promise made

to

to those that love God, respected him in his state of impenitency! — (2.) When we extol free grace, and declare that *God's mercy is over ALL his works*, you directly answer, that the word *ALL* must be taken in a limited sense: but when you extol the profitability of sin, *ALL, in ALL things working for good*, must be taken universally, and include *sin and corruption*, contrary to the context. — (3.) I say, contrary to the context; for just before the apostle declares, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, ye shall evidence the truth of Ezekiel's doctrine, *When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, in his sin that he hath sinned shall he die* — and at the end of the chapter the things that work for good are enumerated, and they include all tribulations and creatures, but not our own sin, unless you can prove it to be God's creature, and not the devil's production. — (4.) It is no where promised that sin shall do us good. On the contrary, God constantly represents it as the greatest evil in the world, the root of all other temporal and eternal evils: and as he makes it the object of his invariable disapprobation, so, till they repent, he levels his severest threatnings at sinners without respect of persons. But the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* has made a new discovery. Thro' the glass of Dr. Crisp he sees that one of the choicest promises in scripture respects the commission of sin, of theft and incest, adultery and murder. So grossly are threatnings and promises, punishments and rewards, confounded together by this fashionable divinity!

(5.) I grant that in some cases the punishment inflicted upon a sinner has been over-ruled for good: but what is this to the *sin itself*? Is it reasonable to ascribe to *sin* the good that may spring from the *rod* with which sin is punished? Some robbers have perhaps been brought to repentance by the gallows, and others deterred from committing robbery by the terror of their punishment; but by what rule in logic or divinity can we infer from thence either that any robbers

robbers love God, or that *all* robberies shall work together for their good.

But "Onesimus robbed Philemon his master; and "flying from justice" was brought under Paul's "preaching and converted." Surely Sir, you do not insinuate, that Onesimus's conversion depended upon robbing his master! Or that it would not have been better for him to have served his master faithfully, and stay'd in Asia to hear the gospel with Philemon, than to have rambled to Rome for it in consequence of his crime! The Heathens said *let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die*. It will be well if some do not say upon a fairer prospect than theirs, "Let us *steal* and rob, for to-morrow we shall be converted."

XVII. You add, that "the royal and holy seed was continued by the incest of Judah with Tamar, and the adultery of David with Bathsheba." And do you really think, Sir, God made choice of that line to shew how incest and adultery *work together for good*? For my part, I rather think that it was because if he had chosen any other line, he would have met with *more* such blots. You know that God slew David's child conceived in adultery; and if he chose Solomon to succeed David, it was not because the adulteress Bathsheba was his mother, but because he was then the *best* of David's children: for I may say of God's chusing the son; what Samuel said of his chusing the father, *The Lord looketh on the heart*, 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

XVIII. You proceed in your enumeration of the good that sin does to the pleasant children. "How "has many a poor soul who has been faithless thro' "fear of man, even blessed God for Peter's denial!" Surely, Sir, you mistake: none but the fiend who desired to have *Peter that he might sift him*, could bless God for the apostle's crimes; nor could any one on such an horrid account bless any other God but *the god of this world*. David said, *My eyes*

eyes run down with water, because men keep not thy law; but the author of Pietas Oxoniensis tells us, that "many a poor soul has blessed God" for the most horrid breaches of his law! Weep no more, perfidious apostle: thou hast cast the net on the right side of the ship; thy three curses have procured God multitudes of blessings! Surely, Sir, you cannot mean this! "Many a poor soul has blessed God" for granting a pardon to Peter, but never for Peter's denial. It is extremely dangerous thus to confound a crime, with the pardon granted to a penitent criminal.

XIX. Upon the same principle you add, "How have many others been raised out of the mire, by considering the tenderness shewn to the incestuous Corinthian?" I am glad you do not say "by considering the incest of the Corinthian." The good received by *many* did not then spring from his horrid crime, but from the *tenderness* of the apostle. This instance therefore, by your own confession, does not prove that sin does any good to believers.

But as you tell us with what *tenderness* the apostle restored that man, when he was *swallowed up in godly sorrow*, you will permit me to remind you of the *severity* which he shewed him while he continued impenitent. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, said he, when ye are gathered together, deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.* Hence it appears, the apostle thought his case so desperate, that his body must be solemnly delivered to Satan, in order if possible to bring his soul to repentance. Now if the incestuous man's sins "had been for ever and for ever cancelled;" if he had not forfeited the divine favor, and cut himself off from the *general assembly of the first-born* by his crime; what power could the apostle, who acted under the influence of the Spirit, have had to cut him off from the visible church as a corrupt member? What right to deliver the body of one of "God's pleasant children" to destruction?

destruction? Was this *finished salvation*? For my part, as I do not believe in a *two-fold*; I had almost said, *Jesuitical* will in God, I am persuaded, he would have us consider things as they are; an impenitent adulterer as a profligate heathen, and a penitent believer as "his pleasant child."

XX. You add, (1.) a "grievous fall serves to make believers know their place." No indeed, it serves only to make them *forget* their place; witness David, who, far from *knowing* his place, wickedly took that of Uriah; and Eve, who by falling into the condemnation of the devil, took her Maker's place; in her imagination, and esteemed herself as wise as God.—(2.) "It drives them nearer to Christ." Surely you mistake, Sir; you mean nearer the devil; for a fall into pride may drive me nearer Lucifer, a fall into adultery and murder may drive me nearer Belial and Moloch; but not nearer Jesus Christ.—(3.) "It makes them more dependent on his strength." No such thing. The genuine effect of a fall into sin, is to stupify the conscience and harden the heart, witness the state of obduracy in which God found Adam, and the state of carnal security in which Nathan found David, after their crimes.—(4.) "It keeps them more watchful for the future." Just the reverse: it prevents their watching for the future. If David had been made more watchful by falling into adultery, would he have fallen into treachery and murder? If Peter had been made more watchful by his *first* fall into perjury would he have fallen *three* times successively!—(5.) "It will cause them to sympathize with others in the like situation." By no means. A fall into sin will naturally make us desirous of drawing another into our guilty condition. Witness the Devil and Eve, Eve and Adam, David and Bathsheba. The royal adulterer was so far from sympathizing with the man who had unkindly taken his neighbour's favorite ew-lamb, that he directly swore *As the Lord*

Lord liveth the man that has done this thing shall surely die.

(6.) "It will make them sing louder to the praise of restoring grace throughout all the ages of eternity." I demand proof of this. I greatly question whether Demas, Alexander the Copper-smith, Hymeneus, Philetus, and many of the fallen believers mentioned in the epistles of our Lord to the churches of Asia, in the epistle to the Hebrews, and in those of St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, shall sing restoring grace at all. The apostle far from representing them all as singing *LOUDER*, gives us to understand that many of them shall be *thought worthy of a much sorer punishment* than the sinners consumed by fire from heaven; and that *there remaineth no more sacrifice for their sins*: (a sure proof that Christ's sacrifice availed for them, till they accounted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing) for, adds the apostle, *the Lord will judge his people*; and notwithstanding all that Dr. Crisp says to the contrary, *there remaineth for apostates a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth*, and not "*louder songs*," await the *unprofitable servant*.

But supposing some are renewed to repentance and escape out of the snare of the devil; can you imagine they will be upon the footing of those, who standing *stedfast and immoveable* always abounded in the work of the Lord? Shall then the labour of these be in vain in the Lord? Are not our works to follow us? Shall the unprofitable servant, if restored, receive a crown of glory equal to his, who from the time he listed *has always fought the good fight, and kept the faith*? The doctrine you would inculcate at once bears hard upon the equity of the divine conduct, and strikes a fatal blow at the root of all diligence and faithfulness, so strongly recommended in the oracles of God.

You will be sensible of your error if you observe, that all the fine things which you tell us of *fall into sin*

sin, belong not to the *fall*, but to an *happy recovery from it*: and my honored correspondent is as much mistaken, when he ascribes to *sin* the effects of *repentance* and *faith*, as if he ascribed to a frost the effect of a thaw, or to sickness the consequences of a recovery.

And now that we have seen how you have done a *pious* man's strange work; permit me, Sir, to tell you that thro' the prevalence of human corruption, a word spoken for sin generally goes farther than ten thousand spoken against it. This I know, that if a fall, in an hour of temptation, appears only half so *profitable* as you represent it, thousands will venture after David into the whirl-pool of wickedness. But alas! *facilis descensus averni*, &c. it is easier to follow him when he plunges in, than when he struggles out with his *eyes wasted*, his *flesh dried up*, and his *bones broken*.

XXI. I gladly do you the justice, honored, Sir, to observe that you exclaim against sin in the next page; but does not the antidote come too late? You say, "Whatever may be God's secret will, we are "to keep close to the declaration of his own written "word, which binds us to resist sin." But alas! you make a bad matter worse by representing God as having two wills, a *secret* effectual *will* that we should sin, and a revealed will, or *written word*, commanding us to resist sin! If these insinuations are just, I ask, Why should we not regard God's *secret*, as much as his *revealed will*? Nay, why should we not regard it *more*, since it is the *more efficacious*, and consequently the *stronger will*?

You add, "He would be mad who should wil-
"fully fall down, and break a leg or an arm, be-
"cause he knew there was a skilful surgeon at hand
"to set it." But I beg leave to dissent from my honored opponent. For, supposing I had a crooked leg, appointed to be broken *for good* by God's *secret will* intimated to me: a dear friend strongly argued

urged, not only that the surgeon is a thand, but that he would render my leg straiter, handsomer, and stronger than before: must I not be a fool, or a coward, if I hesitate throwing myself down?

O Sir, if the *deceitfulness of sin* is so great, that thousands greedily commit it, when the gallows on earth, and horrible torments in hell, are proposed for their just wages; how will they be able to escape in the hour of temptation, if they are encouraged to transgress the divine law, by assurances, that they shall reap eternal advantages from their sin! Oh! how highly necessary was it, that Mr. W. should warn his assistants against talking of a *state of justification and sanctification*, in so unguarded a manner as you, Sir, and the other admirers of Dr. Crisp so frequently do?

You conclude this letter by some quotations from Mr. Wesley, whom you vainly try to press into the Doctor's service, by representing him as saying of established Christians what he speaks of babes in Christ, and of the commission of adultery and murder what he only means of evil desire resisted, and evil tempers restrained: but more of this in a *Treatise on Christian Perfection*.

Your FIFTH LETTER begins by a civil reproof, for "speaking rather in a sneering manner of that heart-cheering expression so often used by awakened divines, the *finished salvation of CHRIST*:" an expression which, by the bye, you will not find once in all my letters. But why some divines, whom you look upon as unawakened, do not admire the unscriptural expression of *finished salvation*, you may see ad check, page 81.

I am thankful for your second reproof, and hope it will make me more careful not to "speak as a man of the world." But the third I really cannot thank you for. "You are not very sparing of hard names against Dr. Crisp," says my honored correspondent; and again, "The hard names, and heavy
I " censures

" censures thrown out against the Doctor, are by
 " far more unjustifiable than what has been deliver-
 " ed against Mr. W." The hardest names I give to
 your favorite divine are, *the Doctor, the good Doctor,*
 and *the honest Doctor*, whom notwithstanding all his
 mistakes, I represent (a check, page 24) as a good
 man shouting aloud *Salvation to the Lamb of God.*
 Now, Sir, I should be glad to know by what rule,
 either of *criticism* or *charity*, you can prove that these
 are *hard names, more unjustifiable than* the names of
 " papist unmasked, heretic, apostate, worse than
 papists," &c. which have been of late so liberally
 bestowed upon Mr. W.

I confess that those branches of Dr. Crisp's doctrine
 which stand in direct opposition to the practical gos-
 pel of Christ, I have taken the liberty to call *Crispi-*
anity; for had I called them *Christianity*, my con-
 science and one half of the bible would have flown
 in my face: and had I called them *Calvinism*, Wil-
 liams, Flavel, Allein, Bishop Hopkins, and num-
 bers of *sound Calvinists*, would have proved me mis-
 taken; for they agree to represent the peculiarities
 of the Doctor, as *loose Antinomian tenets*; and if any
 man can prove them either *legal* or *evangelical*, I
 shall gladly recant those epithets, which I have some
 times given, not the good Doctor, but his unscrip-
 tural notions.

In the mean time permit me to observe, that if
 any one judges of my letters by the 26th page of your
 book, he will readily say of them what you say of the
 Rev. Mr. Sellon's works: " I have never read
 " them, and from the accounts I hear of the abu-
 " sive unchristian spirit with which they are writ-
 " ten, I believe I shall never give myself that trou-
 " ble." Now Sir, I have read Mr. Sellon's books,
 and have therefore more right than you, who never
 read them, to give them a public character. You
 tell us you " *have HEARD of the imbecility of the*
performance,"

+performance;" &c. and I assure my readers I have found it a masterly mixture of the skill belonging to the sensible scholar, the good logician, and the sound anti-Calvinian divine.

He is blunt, I confess, and sometimes to an excess. " Really, says he in a private letter, I cannot set my razor; there is a roughness about me I cannot get rid of. If honest truth will not excuse me, I must bear the blame of those whom nothing will please but smooth things." But sharp (you would say *abusive*) as he is, permit me to tell you that my much admired countryman Calvin was much more so.

For my part, tho' I would no more plead for *abuse* than for *adultery and murder*, yet like a true Suisse I love *blunt honesty*; and to give you a proof of it, I shall take the liberty to observe, It is much easier to say a book is full of *hard names*, and *heavy censures*, written in an *abusive unchristian spirit*; and to insinuate it is " dangerous, or not worth reading;" than it is fairly to answer one single page of it. And how far a late publication proves the truth of this observation, I leave our candid readers to decide.

Page 38, you " assure me upon honor, that Mr. W.'s pieces against election and perseverance, " (Why did you forget *reprobation*?) have greatly " tended to establish your belief in those most comfortable doctrines." Hence you conclude, that " Mr. W.'s pen has done much service to the Calvinistic cause," and add, that " some very experienced Christians hope, he will write again upon that subject, or publish a new edition of his former tracts."

You are too much acquainted with the world, dear Sir, not to know that most Deists declare, they were

I 2

established

† Some of the Rev. Mr. Sellon's works are, Arguments against the doctrine of general redemption considered.—A defence of God's sovereignty—and The Church of England, vindicated from the charge of Calvinism. All of these are well worth the reading of every sensible and pious man.

established in their sentiments by reading the Old and New Testament. But would you argue conclusively if you inferred from thence, that the sacred writers *have done* infidelity *much service*? And if some confident infidels expressed their hopes, that our bishops *would reprint* the bible to propagate Deism; would you not see thro' their empty boast, and pity their deistical *flourish*? Permit me, honored Sir, to expose by a smile the similar wish of the persons you mention, who, if they are "very experienced Christians," will hardly pass for very modest logicians.

The gentleman of fortune you mention never read *all* Mr. W.'s tracts, nor *one* of Mr. Sellon's on the Crispian orthodoxy: and I am no more surprized to see you both dissent from those divines than I should be to find you both mistaken upon the bench, if you passed a *decisive* sentence, before you had so much as heard *one* witness out. The clergyman you refer to has probably been as preeipitate as the two pious magistrates; therefore you will permit me to doubt whether he, any more than my honored opponent, "has had courage enough to see for himself."

C O N C L U S I O N.

Having so long animadverted upon your letters, it is time to consider the present state of our controversy. Mr. W. privately advances among his own friends some propositions, designed to keep them from running into the fashionable errors of Dr. Crisp. These propositions are secretly procured, and publicly exposed thro' the three kingdoms, as dreadfully heretical, and subversive of the Protestant doctrine of *Justification by faith*. In Mr. W.'s absence a friend writes in defence of his propositions. The Rev. Mr. Shirley, instead of trying to defend his mistakes by argument, publicly recants his circular letter and his volume of sermons by the lump. Some of the honest

nest souls, who had been carried away by the stream of fashionable error, begin to look about them, and ask whether *narratives* and *recantations* are to pass for *scriptures* and *arguments*? The worthy author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* to quiet them, enters the lists, and makes a stand against the *anti-Crispian* propositions; but what a stand!

(1.) "*Man's faithfulness*, says he, I have no objection to, in a *sober gospel sense* of the word." So Mr. W.'s first proposition, by my opponent's confession, bears a *sober gospel sense*.

(2.) He attacks the doctrine of *working for life* by proposing some of the very objections answered in the vindication, without taking the least notice of the answers—by producing scriptures quite foreign to the question, and keeping out of sight those which have been advanced—by passing over in silence a variety of rational arguments—jumbling all the degrees of spiritual life and death, acceptance and justification mentioned in the sacred oracles—confounding all the dispensations of divine grace towards man—and levelling at Mr. W. a witticism which wounds Jesus Christ himself.

(3.) He acknowledges the truth of the doctrine that we must "*do something in order to obtain justification*;" and after this candid concession, fairly gives up the fundamental Protestant doctrine of *Justification by faith*—the very doctrine which Luther called *Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*, and which our church so strongly maintains in her articles and homilies. The Rev. Mr. Shirley throws his sermon on *Justification by faith* overboard; his second comes up to mend the matter, and does it so unfortunately as to throw the handle after the ax. He renounces the doctrine itself. *I maintain*, says he, *that believing cannot be previous to justification*. As dangerous a proposition as was ever advanced by Dr. Crisp, and refuted by all the sober Calvinists of the last century!

I-3.

(4.) He

(4.) He opposes St. Peter's, Mr. Henry's, and Mr. W.'s doctrine, that "Cornelius was accepted of God in consequence of his *fearing God and working righteousness*," and insinuates that Cornelius was accepted *before* he feared God and worked righteousness. Upon this scheme, the words of St. Peter, *he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him*, may mean, "he that DARETH God and worketh UNRIGHTEOUSNESS is accepted of him!"

(5.) He represents Mr. W. as a Papist, for having privately observed among his friends, that we have been too much afraid of the word *merit*, while he allows real Protestants, the Countess of Huntingdon, and the Rev. Mr. Shirley, to publish and sing, *We merit heaven by the righteousness which Christ has supplied*. Nay, he sings the same bold words at the Locke-Chapel. The Rev. Mr. Madan's *we merit* passes for gospel; his hymns are every where recommended as evangelical; but "Popery is about mid-way between Protestantism and Mr. Wesley." What strange prejudice! And yet, surprizing! My honored correspondent accuses *me* of betraying "no small degree of *chicanery*" upon the article of *merit*!

(6.) He attempts to "split the hair" which the Rev. Mr. Shirley is wise enough not to attempt. But how? Without ceremony he cuts off the middle term between *being rewarded according to our works*, and *as our works deserve*; he throws out of the question this proposition that "*we are rewarded BECAUSE of our works*," tho' it is supported by the plainest scriptures.

(7.) Notwithstanding this unwarrantable liberty, when he confidently soars upon the wings of orthodoxy, to find his broad passage between "*East and West*;" he directly falls into Mr. W.'s sentiment, about the *rewardableness* of works; and, before he is aware shakes hands with the good Papist Scotus, and the good Protestant Baxter.

(8.) The

(8.) The last proposition which he attacks is, that
 “ we are continually pleasing or displeasing to God
 “ according to the whole of our inward and outward
 “ behaviour.” And what does he advance against
 it? Assertions and distinctions, contradicted by the
 general tenor of the bible.—Scriptures detached from
 the context, and set at variance with the clearest de-
 clarations of God, and loudest dictates of conscience.
 —And what is worse than all, dangerous enumera-
 tions of the good that falling into adultery, murder,
 perjury, and incest does to them that love God.

And now, honored Sir, let the Christian world
 judge, whether you have been able to fix the mark
 of error upon *one* of the propositions so loudly de-
 cryed as *heretical*; and whether the letters you
 have honored me with, do not expose the cause
 which you have attempted to defend, and demon-
 strate the absolute necessity of erecting and defend-
 ing such a seasonable rampart as the minutes, to check
 the rapid progress of Dr. Crisp’s gospel.

Permit me, honored and dear Sir, to conclude
 by assuring you, that altho’ I have thought myself
 obliged *publicly* to shew the mistakes in the five let-
 ters which you have *publicly* directed to me, I glad-
 ly do you the justice to acknowledge, that your prin-
 ciples have not that effect upon your conduct, which
 they naturally have upon the conversation of hun-
 dreds who are *consistent* Antinomians. See 2d check,
 page 71.

If I have addressed my *three checks* to the Rev. Mr.
 Shirley and yourself, God is my witness that it was
 not to reflect upon two of the most eminent cha-
 racters in the circle of my religious acquaintance.
 Forcible circumstances have over-ruled my inclina-
 tion. Decipimur specie recti. Thinking to attack
 error, you have attacked the very truth which pro-
 vidence calls me to defend: and the attack appears
 to me so much the more dangerous as your laborious
 zeal and eminent piety are more worthy of public
 regard,

regard; than the boisterous rant and loose insinuations of twenty *practical* Antinomians. The tempter is not so great a novice in Antichristian politics, as to engage only *such* to plead for *doctrinal* Antinomianism. This would soon spoil the trade. It is his master-piece of wisdom, to get *good men* to do him that eminent service. He knows that their *good lives* will make way for their *bad* principles. Nor does he ever deceive with more decency and success than under the respectable cloak of their genuine piety.

If a wicked man pleads for sin, *scœnum habet in cornu*, he carries the mark on his forehead: we stand upon our guard. But when a good man gives us to understand that *there are no lengths God's people may not run, nor any depths they may not fall into, without losing the character of men after God's own heart—that many will praise God for our denial of Christ—that sin and corruption work for good, that a fall into adultery will drive us nearer to Christ, and make us sing louder to the praise of free grace*; when he quotes scripture too in order to support these assertions, calling them the pure gospel, and representing the opposite doctrine as the Pelagian heresy worse than Popery itself; he casts the Antinomian net on the right side of the ship, and is likely to enclose a great multitude of unwary men; especially if some of the *best* hands in the kingdom drive the frightened shoal into the net, and help to drag it to shore.

This is, honored Sir, what I apprehend you have done, not designedly, but thinking to do God service: and this is what every good man, who does not look at the gospel thro' Dr. Crisp's glass, must resolutely oppose. Hence the steadiness with which I have looked in the face a man of God, whose feet I should be glad to wash at any time, under a lively sense of my great inferiority.

And now, as if I were admitted to shew you that humble mark of brotherly love, I beg you would not consider the unceremonious plainness of a Suisse-
(mountaineer,)

(mountaineer), as the farcastic insolence of an incorrigible Arminian.

I beseech you to make some difference between the *wisdom* and *poison of the serpent*. If charity forbids to meddle with the latter, does not Christ recommend the former? Is every mild, well-meant irony, a bitter and cruel sarcasm? Should we directly insinuate that it is the sign of "a bad spirit," the mark of murder in the heart; and that he who uses it to sharpen the truth, *† scatters firebrands, arrows and death*? To say nothing of Elijah and the priests of Baal, did our Lord want either deep seriousness or ardent love, when coming more than conqueror from his third conflict in Gethsemane, he roused his nodding disciples by this compassionate irony, *sleep on now, and take your rest*! Did not the usefulness of a loud call, a deserved reproof, a seasonable expostulation, and a solemn warning, meet in that well-timed figure of speech? And was it not more effectual than the two awful charges, which he had given them before?

I intreat you to consider, that when the meanest of God's ministers has truth and conscience on his side, without being either *abusive* or *uncharitable*, he may say, even to one whom the Lord has exalted to the royal dignity, *Thou art the man*! God has exalted you not only among the gentlemen of fortune in this kingdom, but what is an infinitely greater blessing, among the converted men who *are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son*. Yet by a mistake, fashionable among religious people, you have unhappily paid more regard to Dr. Crisp than to St. James. And as you have pleaded the dangerous cause of the impenitent monarch, I have addressed you with the honest boldness of the expostulating prophet. I have said

† This assertion is the grand argument of an evangelical writer in the gospel-magazine, and of a charitable gentleman (a baptist minister I think) in a printed letter dated *Bath*. If this method of arguing is Calvinistically evangelical, my readers will easily perceive it is very far from being either legal or scripturally logical.

said to my honored opponent, "*thou art the man*"—with a commendable design of comforting "mourning backsliders, you have inadvertently given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and unscripturally assured believers, that falls even into enormous sins shall work for their good, and accomplish God's purposes for his glory and their salvation." And as I have supported my expostulations about your *doctrinal* mistakes with plain scripture, which amounts to a *thus says the Lord*; I beseech you to take them in as good part, as King David did the prophet's reproofs about his *practical* miscarriages.

I owe much respect to you, but more to truth, to conscience and to God. If in trying to discharge my duty towards them, I have inadvertently betrayed any want of respect for you; I humbly ask your pardon; and I can assure you in the face of the whole world, that notwithstanding your strong attachment to the peculiarities of Dr. Crisp, as there is no family in the world to which I am under greater obligation than yours, so there are few gentlemen for whom I have so peculiar an esteem, as for the respectable author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*. And till we come where no mistake will raise prejudice, and no prejudice will foment opposition to any part of the truth—till we meet where all that *fear God and work righteousness*, however jarring together now, will join in an eternal chorus, and with perfect harmony ascribe *a common salvation to the Lamb that was slain*; I declare in the fear of God and in the name of Jesus, that no opposite views of the same truths, no clashing diversity of contrary sentiments, no plausible insinuations of narrow-hearted bigotry, shall hinder me from remaining with the greatest sincerity,

Honored and dear Sir,

Your most obedient and obliged Servant
in the bonds of a *practical* Gospel,

MADELEY, Feb. 3, 1772.

J. F.

POSTSCRIPT.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AS I have cleared my conscience with respect to *Antinomianism*, a subject which at this time appears to me of the last importance; I should be glad to employ my leisure hours in writing on subjects more suitable to my taste and private edification: it is by no means my design to obtrude my sentiments upon my Calvinian, any more than upon my Arminian brethren. I sincerely wish peace to both upon the terms of *mutual forbearance*, *Veniam petimus que, damus que vicissim*. Should therefore a fourth publication call for a fourth check; if I can help it, it shall be *short*. I shall just thank my antagonist for his *deserved* reproofs, or point out his *capital* mistakes, and quote the pages in the *three checks* where his objections are already answered. But if his performance is merely Calvinistical, I shall take the liberty of referring him to the Rev. Mr. Sellon's "imbecil performance" which, I apprehend, every unprejudiced person, who has courage to *see* and *read* for himself, will find *strong* enough to refute the *strongest* arguments of Elisha Coles, and the Synod of Dort.

Before I lay by my pen, I beg leave to address a moment the *true* believers who espouse Calvin's sentiments. Think not, honored brethren, that I have no eyes to see the eminent services which many of you render to the church of Christ; no heart to bless God for the Christian graces which shine in your exemplary conduct; no pen to testify, that by letting your light shine before men, you adorn the gospel of God our Saviour, as many of your predecessors have done before you. I am not only persuaded that your opinions are consistent with a genuine conversion, but, I take heaven to witness, how much I prefer a Calvinist who loves God, to a Remonstrant who does not. Yes, although I value Christ infinitely

nitely above Calvin, and St. James above that good, well-meaning man Dr. Crisp. I had a thousand times rather be doctrinally mistaken with the latter than practically deluded with those who speak well of St. James's *perfect law of liberty*, and yet remain lukewarm Laodiceans in heart, and perhaps gross Antinomians in conduct.

This I observe to do your piety justice, and prevent the men of this world, into whose hands these sheets may fall, from *falsely accusing your good conversation in Christ*; and confounding you with *practical* Antinomians, some of whose dangerous notions you inadvertently countenance. If I have therefore taken the liberty of exposing your favorite mistakes, do me the justice to believe that it was not to pour contempt upon your respectable persons; but to set your peculiarities in such a light, as might either engage you to renounce them, or check the forwardness with which some have lately recommended them as the only *doctrines of grace*, and the *pure gospel* of Jesus Christ; unkindly representing their remonstrant brethren as enemies to free grace, and abettors of a dreadful heresy.

If you think that I have exceeded in my checks the bounds which brotherly love prescribes to a controversial writer; permit me to remind you and myself, that we are *parties*, and therefore peculiarly liable to think the worst of each others intentions and performances. By our respective publications we have appealed to the serious world; let us not then take the matter out of their hands: and while we leave to our merciful God the judging of our spirits, let us leave our serious readers to judge of our arguments, and pass sentence upon the manner in which they are proposed.

And you my remonstrant brethren, who attentively look at our controversial engagement; while a Geneva-Anticalvinist solicits an interest in your prayers or *meekness of wisdom*, permit him to offer you
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some seasonable advices, which he wants to inculcate upon his own mind also.

(1.) More than ever let us confirm our love towards our calvinist brethren. If our arguments galled them, let us not envenom the sore by maliciously triumphing over them. Nothing is more likely to provoke their displeasure, and drive them from what we believe to be the truth. If we, that immediately *bear the burthen and heat of this controversial day*, are obliged to cut; help us to act the part of friendly opponents, by directly pouring into the wound the healing balsam of brotherly love; and if you see us carried beyond the bounds of moderation, instantly admonish us, and check our checks. Your *whispers* will go farther than the *clamors* of our opponents. The former, we know, must proceed from truth; but we are apt to suspect that the latter spring from partiality, or a mere stratagem not uncommon in controversial wars. Witness the clamors of the Jews and those of the Ephesians, when the one saw that their Idol-temple, the other, that great Diana was in danger.

(2.) Do not rejoice in the *mistakes* of our opponents, but in the *detection* of error. Desire not that *we*, but that *truth* may prevail. Let us not only be willing that our brethren should win the day, if they have *truth* on their side; but let us make it matter of solemn, earnest and constant prayer. While we decry *confined, shackled* grace, obtruded upon us as *free* grace; let not bigotry *confine* our affections, and *shackle* our hearts. Nothing would be more absurd than to fall into calvinian narrowness of spirit, while we oppose Calvin's narrow system. If we admit the *temper*, we might as well be quite consistent, and at once embrace the *doctrine*. The best method of recommending God's universal love to mankind, is to love all men universally. If absolute reprobation has no place in our principles, let it have none in our affections. If we believe that all share in the

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divine mercy, let all be interested in our brotherly kindness. Should such *practical demonstrations* of universal love, second our *scriptural arguments* for it, by God's blessing bigotry would soon return to Rome, and narrow grace fly back to Geneva.

(3.) Let us strictly observe the rules of decency and kindness, taking care not to treat upon any provocation, any of our opponents in the same manner that they have treated Mr. Wesley. The men of the world hint sometimes that he is a papist, and a jesuit: but good, mistaken men have gone much farther in the present controversy. They have published to the world, that they *do verily believe his principles are too rotten for even a papist to rest upon*—that it may be supposed, *popery is about the midway between protestantism and him*. That he *wades through the quagmires of pelagianism*, deals in *inconsistencies, manifest contradictions, and strange prevarications*—That if a *contrast* was drawn from his various assertions upon the doctrine of *sinless perfection*, a little piece might extend into a *folio volume*—and that they are *more than ever convinced of his prevaricating disposition*. Not satisfied with going to a *benedictine monk* in Paris for help against his dreadful heresy, they have wittily extracted an argument *ad hominem*, from the comfortable dish of tea which he drinks with Mrs. Wesley; and, to compleat the demonstration of their respect for that grey-headed, laborious minister of Christ, they have brought him upon the stage of the controversy in a dress of their own contriving, and made him declare to the world, that *WHENEVER he and fifty-three of his fellow labourers say one thing, they MEAN quite ANOTHER*. And what has he done to deserve this usage at their hands? Which of them has he treated unjustly or unkindly? Even in the course of this controversy has he injured any man? May he not say to this hour, *tu pugnas: ego vapulo tantum*? Let us avoid this warmth, my brethren; remembering that personal reflections will
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never pass for convincing arguments with the judicious and humane.

I have endeavoured to follow this advice with regard to Dr. Crisp: nevertheless, lest you should rank him with *practical* Antinomians, I once more gladly profess my belief that he was a *good* man; and desire that none of you would condemn *all* his sermons, much less his *character*, on account of his *unguarded antinomian* propositions refuted by Williams and Baxter, some of which I have taken the liberty to produce in the preceding checks. As there are a few things exceptionable in good Bishop Hopkins, so there are many things admirable in Dr. Crisp's works: And as the glorious truths advanced by the former, should not make you receive his calvinian mistakes as gospel; so the illegal tenets of the latter, should by no means make you reject his evangelical sayings as Antinomianism. *Prove therefore all things, and hold fast that which is good*, though it should be advanced by the warmest of our opponents; but whatever unadvised step their zeal for what they believe to be the truth makes them take, *put ye on (as the ELECT of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, long-suffering, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

(4.) If you would help us to remove the prejudices of our brethren, not only grant with a good grace, but strongly insist upon the great truths for which they make so noble a stand. Steadily assert with them, that the scraps of morality and formality, by which Pharisees and Deists pretend to merit the divine favor, are only *filthy rags* in the sight of a holy God; and that no righteousness is current in heaven but *the righteousness which is of God by faith*. If they have set their heart upon calling it *the imputed righteousness of Christ*, though the expression is not strictly scriptural, let it pass; but give them to understand, that as *divine* imputation of righteousness

is a most glorious *† reality*, so *human* imputation is a most delusive *dream*: and that of this sort is undoubtedly the *calvinian imputation* of righteousness to a man, who actually defiles his neighbour's bed, and betrays innocent blood. A dangerous contrivance this! not less subversive of common heathenish morality, than of St. James's *pure and undefiled religion*!

Again, our calvinist brethren excel in setting forth a *part* of Christ's priestly office; I mean the immaculate purity of his most holy life, and the all-atoning, all-meritorious sacrifice of his bloody death. Here imitate, and if possible surpass them. Shout a *finished atonement* louder than they. Behold with raptures of joy, and bid all around you behold with transports of gratitude, the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*. If they call this compleat atonement *finished salvation*, or the *finished work of Christ*, indulge them still; for peace's sake let those expressions pass: nevertheless, at proper times give them to understand, that it is absolutely contrary to reason, scripture and christian experience, to think that *all* Christ's mediatorial work is *finished*. Insinuate, you should be very miserable if he had nothing more to do *for* you and *in* you. Tell them, as they can

† God's imputation of righteousness is always *according to truth*. As all sinful men actually *partake* of Adam's sinful nature, by the defiling seed of his corruption, before God *accounts* them *guilty* together with him: so all righteous men *partake* of Christ's holy nature by the seed of divine grace, before God *accounts* them *righteous* together with Christ. This dictate of reason is confirmed by scripture. *Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able also to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness; and it shall be imputed to us, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead.* Rom. iv. 21. &c. From this passage it is evident that faith, which unites to Christ and *purifies the heart*, is previous to God's imputation of righteousness, although not to Dr. Crisp's imputation, which by a little mistake of only 5 or 6000 years he dates from *before the foundation of the world*. One is sadly out, either the good Doctor, or the great Apostle.

can bear it, that he works *daily* as a *prophet* to enlighten you, as a *priest* to make intercession for you, as a *king* to subdue your enemies, as a *redeemer* to deliver you out of all your troubles, and as a *Saviour* to help you to work out your own salvation; and hint that in all these respects Christ's work is no more finished than the working of our own salvation is completed.

The judicious will understand you; as for bigots on all sides, you know; they are proof against scripture and good sense. Nevertheless mild irony sharply pointing a scriptural argument, may yet pass between the joints of their impenetrable armour, and make them feel—either some shame, or some weariness of contention. But this is a dangerous method, which I would recommend to very few. None should dip his pen in the wine of irony, till he has dipped it in the oil of love; and even then, he should not use it without constant prayer, and as much caution as a surgeon lances an impostume. If he goes too deep, he does mischief; if not deep enough, he loses his time; the virulent humor is not discharged, but irritated by the skin-deep operation. And *who is sufficient for these things?* Gracious God of wisdom and love! if thou callest us to this difficult and thankless office, let all *our sufficiency be of thee*; and should the operation succeed, thine and thine alone shall be all the glory.

(5.) And yet, brethren, *I show you a more excellent way* than that of mild irony sharpening a strong argument. If love is the fulfilling of the law, love after all must be the destruction of antinomianism. We shall do but little good by exposing the doctrinal antinomianism of Dr. Crisp's admirers, if our own tempers and conduct are inconsistent with our profession of evangelical legality. When our antagonists cannot shake our arguments, they will upbraid us with our practice. Let us then take care not to hold the truth in unrighteousness: let our moderation and evangelical

gical legality appear even to our *candid* opponents: so shall the *righteousness of the law be fulfilled in us* that believe the anti-Crispian truth: so shall our *faith establish the law* of ardent love to God and man; and wherever that *law is established*, antinomianism is no more. And if, when we truly love our antagonists, they still look upon our opposition to their errors as an abuse of their persons, and call our exposing their mistakes "sneering at the truth;" let us wrap our souls in the mantle of that *love which is not provoked*; remembering the *disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord*.

(6.) Above all, while we expostulate with our brethren for going to one extreme, let us not go to another. Many in the last century so preached what Christ did ~~for~~ us in the days of his flesh, as to overlook what he does ~~in~~ us in the days of his spirit. The Quakers saw their error; but while they exposed it, they ran into the opposite. They so extolled Christ *living* in us, as to say but little of Christ *dying* for us. At this time many hearing our *salvation is so finished* by Christ, that we need not *work it out with fear and trembling*, are justly shocked; and thinking they cannot fly too far from so wild a notion, they run headlong into pelagianism, socinianism, or gross infidelity. Let us, my brethren, learn wisdom by their contrary mistakes. While some run full east, and others full west, keep we under the bright meridian line of evangelical truth, at an equal distance from their dangerous extremes. By cordial faith let us daily *receive the atonement*; and making our perpetual boast of Christ crucified, let us recommend his inestimable merits to all convinced sinners, cheerfully commending our souls to him *in well doing*, and growing in his knowledge till we experience that *he is all and in all*. So shall we adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things; nor will our opponents have any occasion to reprove us for *pharisaic unbelief*, when we reprove them for *antinomian faith*.

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